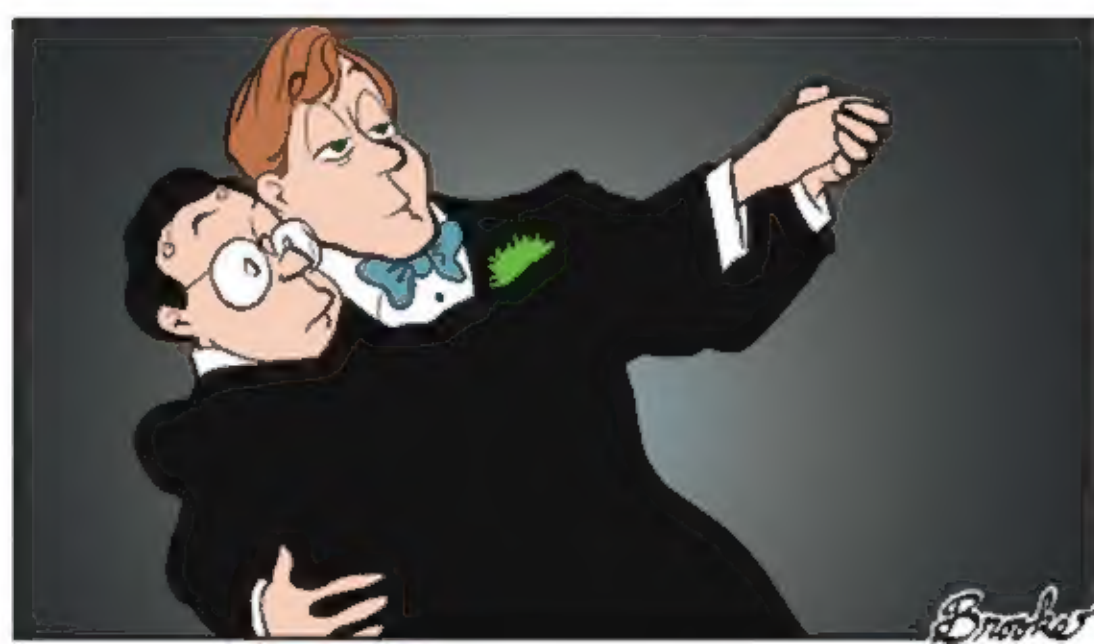
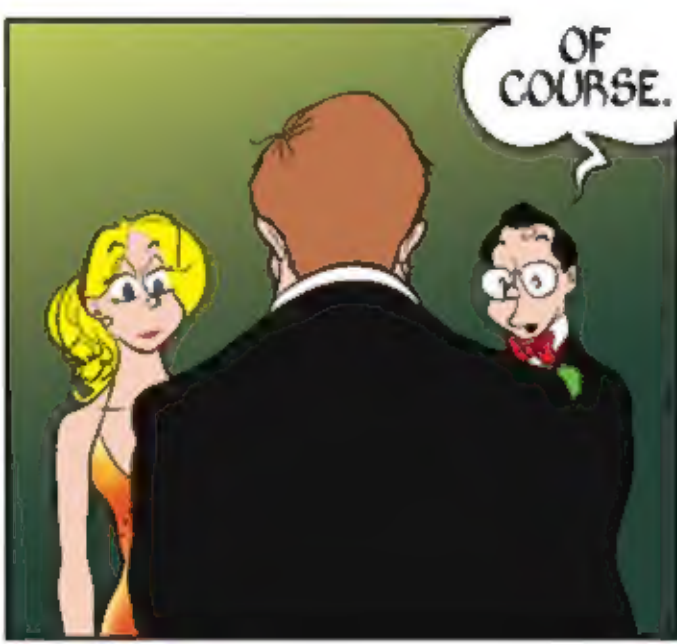




2006

# 9 CHICKWEED LANE



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...THEY  
MAKE  
SUCH A  
COUPLE.



DON'T LOOK AT ME!...  
...I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING BUT  
ENCOURAGE MARK TO TALK  
TO JANICE!...  
...EDDA! MAKE  
YOUR CAT QUIT  
STARING AT ME!



1-2 ©2006 Brooke McEldowney. Dist. by UFS, Inc.

*Brooke*

BOY, ARE YOU  
FEELING GUILTY!  
IT'S NOT AS IF  
SHE'S THINKING  
ANYTHING...SHE'S  
JUST A CAT!

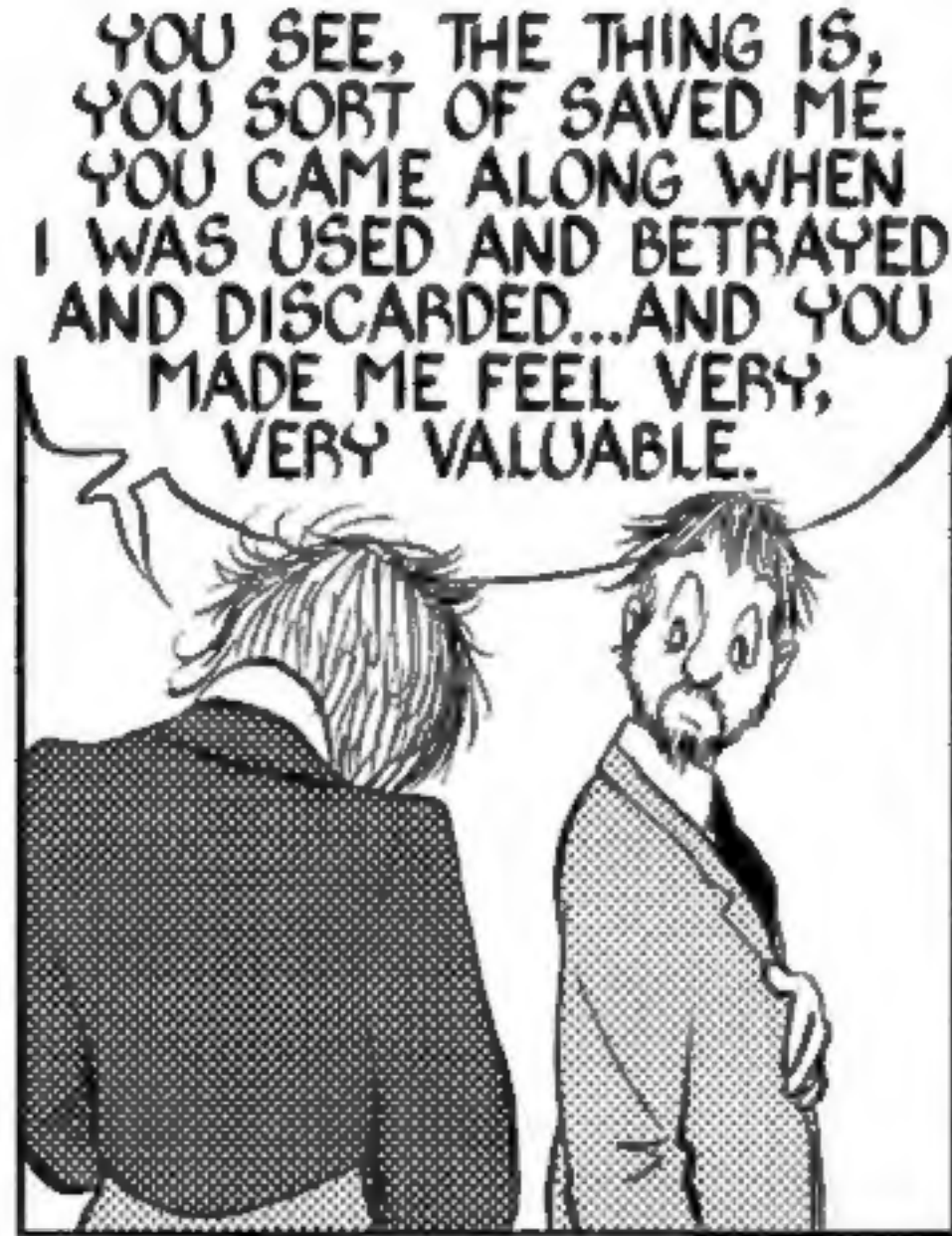


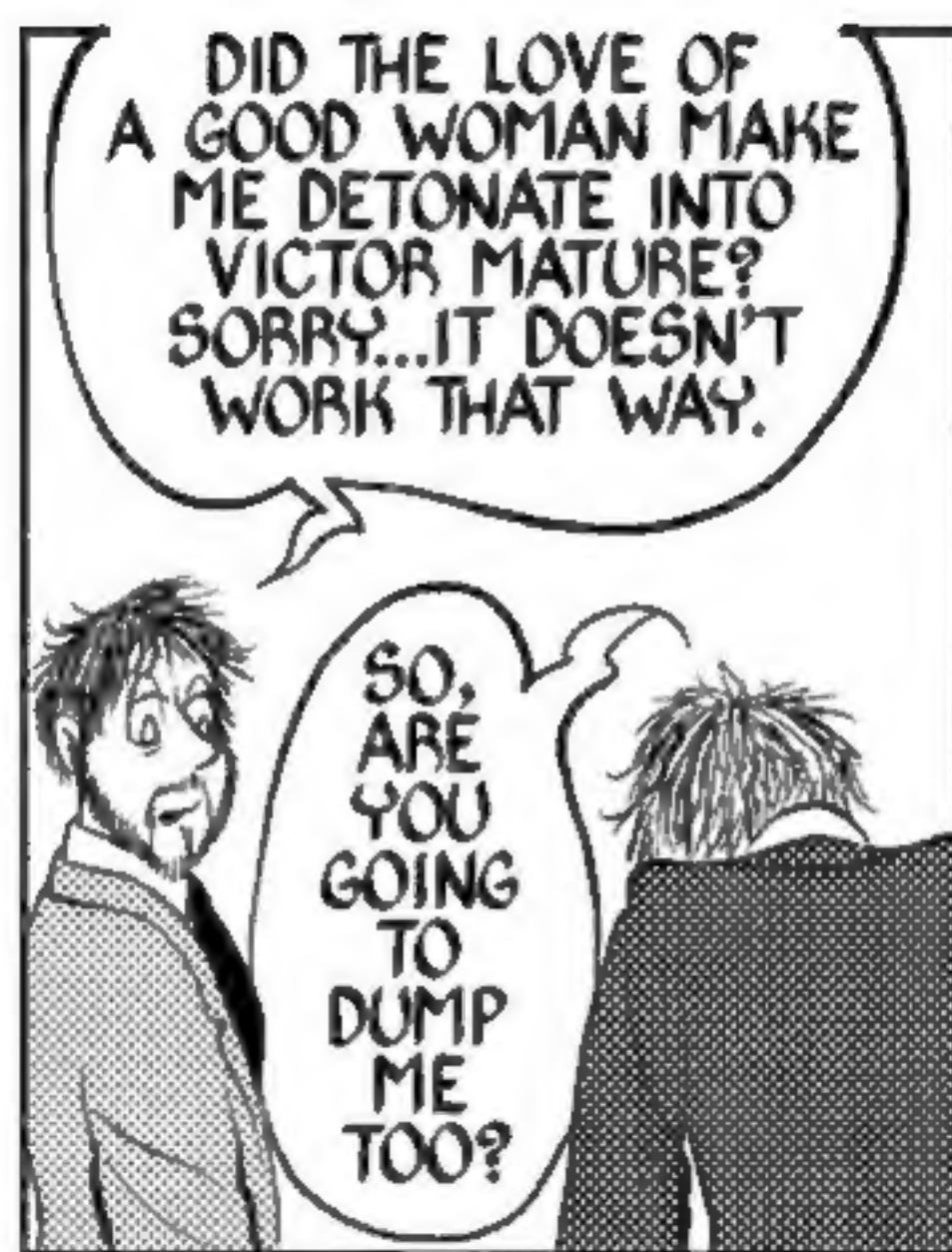


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Brooke



SO, WE CAN  
STILL BE FRIENDS?



AS LONG AS YOU KNOW  
I'M ALREADY IN LOVE WITH  
A REALLY FABULOUS GUY,  
AND ALWAYS WILL BE.  
OKAY?



AS LONG AS YOU KNOW  
I'M ALREADY IN LOVE WITH  
A REALLY FABULOUS GUY,  
AND ALWAYS  
WILL BE.  
OKAY?



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Brooke

ISABEL, DO YOU  
THINK YOU COULD  
EVER FALL IN LOVE  
WITH ME?

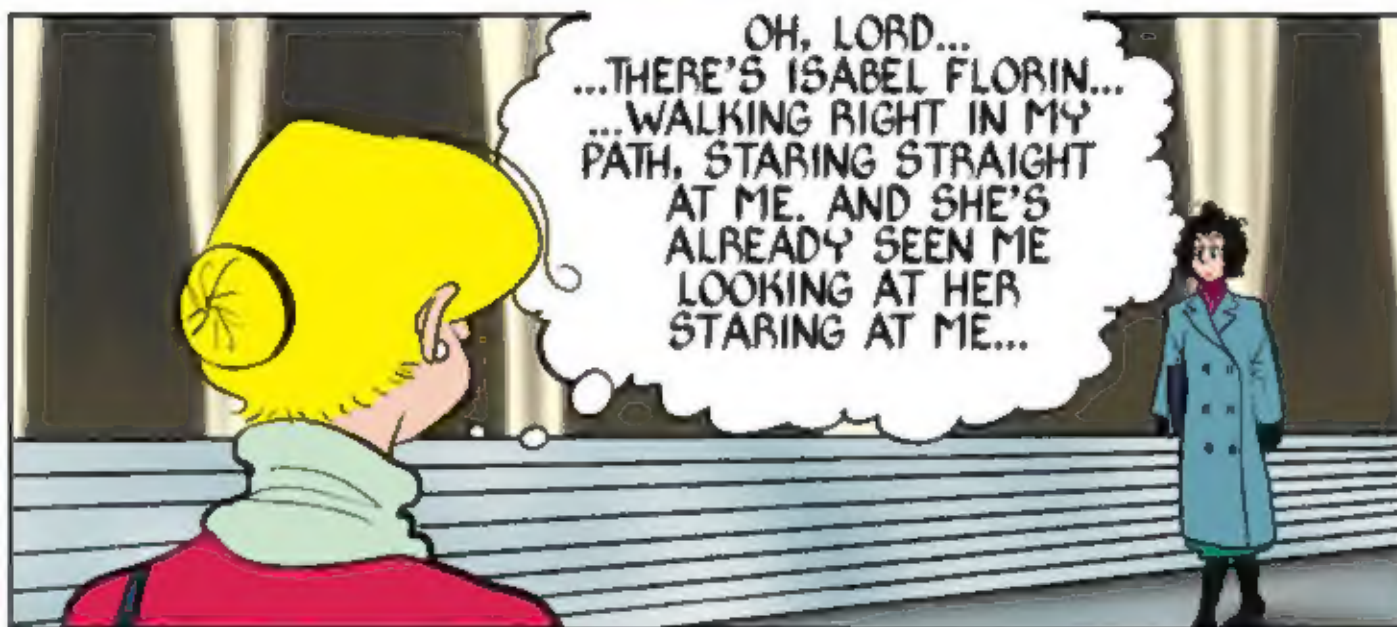
YOU MEAN, IF I WERE  
DESPERATE, COMPLETELY AT  
LOOSE ENDS, DWELLING ON  
A BARREN LANDSCAPE WITH  
NO ONE ELSE IN SIGHT,  
DEVOID OF TASTE AND VERY  
LIKELY NOT OF  
SOUND MIND?

YEAH...  
...OKAY.

Brooke



# 9 CHICKWEED LANE







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I'VE COME TO A MILESTONE  
IN MY LIFE, AND YOU'RE  
JUST BEING DIFFICULT, AS  
IS YOUR WONT.

IT'S, "AS IS  
YOUR WANT."

NO...YOUR WANT IS  
YOUR NEED, WHERE YOU'RE  
FOUND LACKING...YOUR  
WONT IS YOUR PREDIS-  
POSITION. WHAT YOU  
WANT IS ANY SYMPATHY  
FOR MY FEELINGS...  
...AS ALWAYS.

IN OTHER WORDS...  
...MY WANT IS  
MY WONT,  
AND MY  
WONT IS  
MY WANT.

STOP CLENCHING  
YOUR BUTTOCKS, DEAR.  
IT'S UNLADYLIKE,  
AND YOU'RE MAKING  
THE UPHOLSTERY  
BOUNCE.

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Brooke

ALL I'M STRUGGLING TO SAY IS, ELLIOTT HAS BEEN ASKING ME TO MARRY HIM FOR YEARS, ON A WEEKLY BASIS. THE NEXT TIME HE ASKS, I'VE DECIDED TO SAY YES.



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WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME, I GUESS. I MEAN, FOR A MAN HIS AGE, HE'S STILL HOLDING UP...HE'S NOT TOO PAUNCHY, HIS EYES AREN'T ALL THAT CREASED...



...AND WHEN HE STANDS UP, THE POPPING OF JOINTS LENDS A FESTIVE SOUND, SOMEWHAT REMINISCENT OF FIREWORKS IGNITING IN THE DISTANCE.



THAT SAID, I WONDER WHY I DON'T CLAW THE TWEEDS RIGHT OFF HIS BACK.



OH...THEN LET US REVIEW BEFORE THE BIG EXAM.



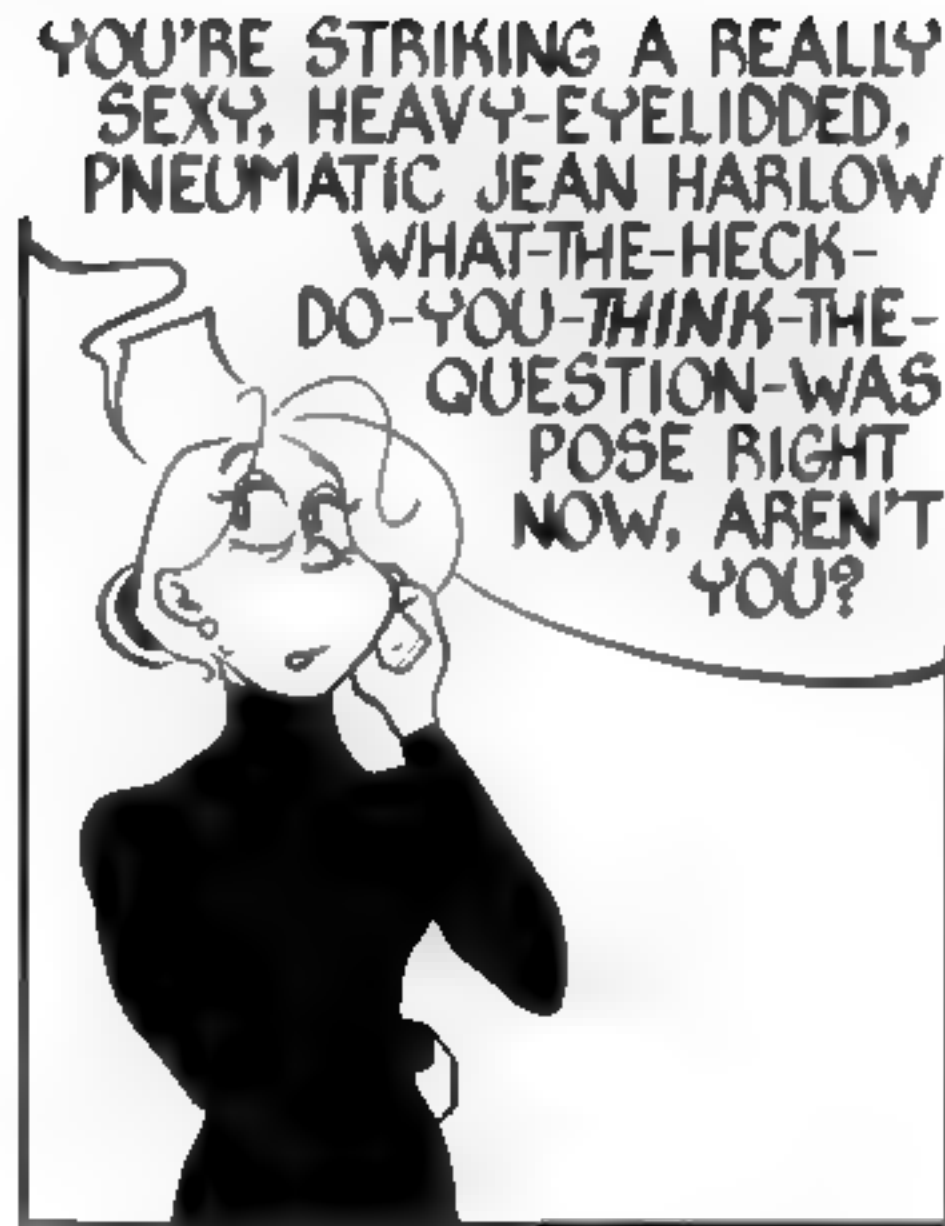




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*Brooke*



I'VE DECIDED  
WHICH DRESS  
I'M GOING TO  
WEAR TONIGHT  
WHEN ELLIOTT  
POPS THE  
QUESTION.

YOU'RE  
CONFIDENT  
HE'LL POP  
IT?



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Brooke



ELLIOTT'S AT THE DOOR.  
HERE I GO, MOTHER.  
...MAKE YOURSELF  
SCARCE.

*Brooke*



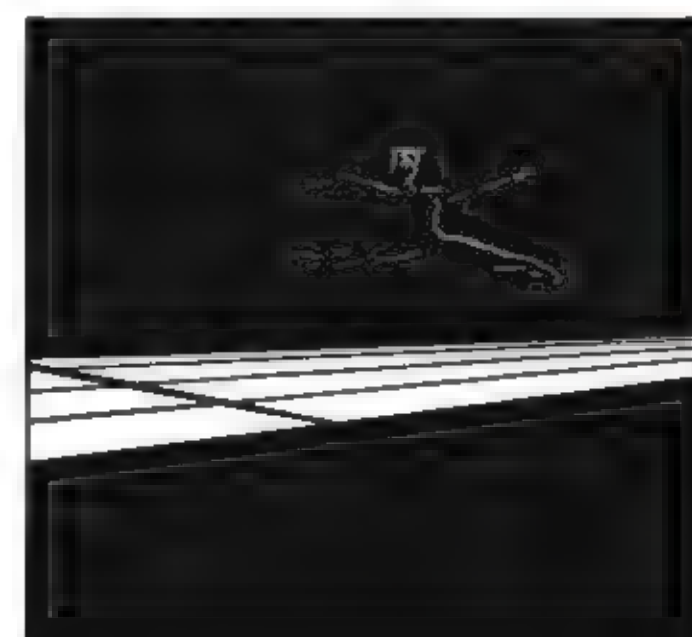
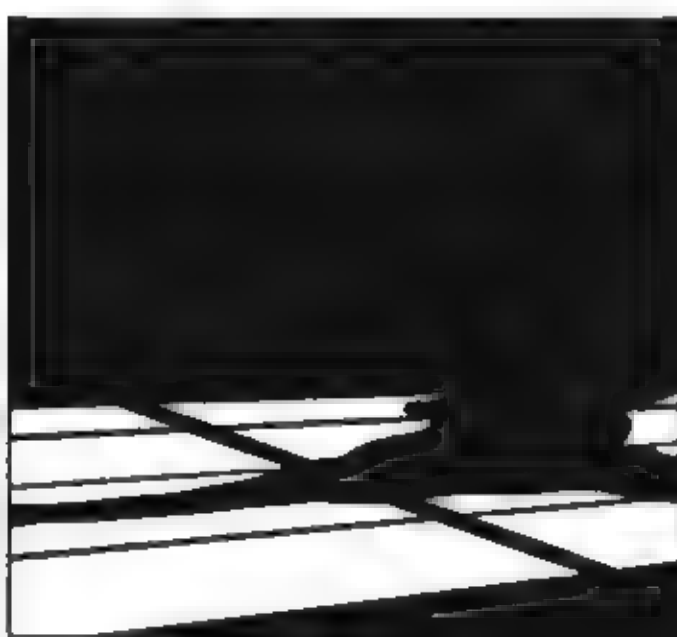
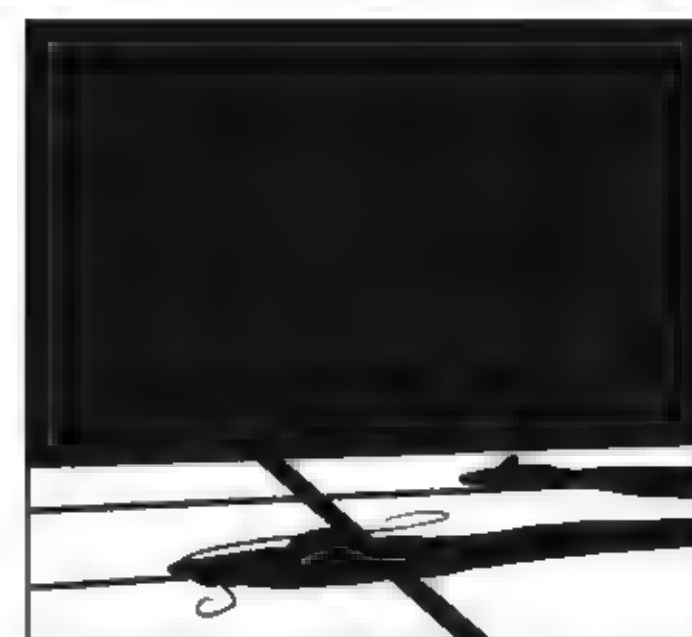
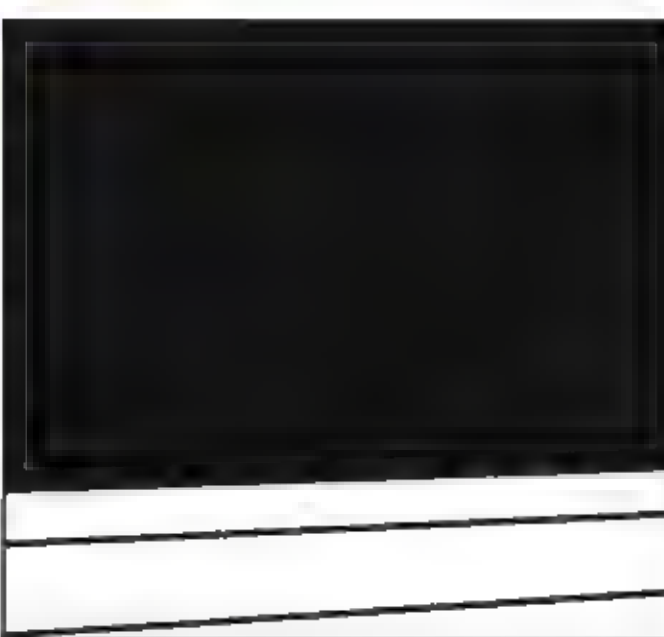
MOTHER, I NEED YOUR HELP.  
ELLIOTT JUST INHALED HIS  
COUGH DROP.

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IT SEEMS WHEN DR. GREENE CANHALED HIS COUGH  
EPISODE, HE ALSO HAD AN  
TELL ME YOU OF ARRHYTHMIA.  
WHAT HE WAS DOING?

HE CAME  
TO MY  
HOUSE AND  
ASKED ME TO  
MARRY HIM.  
...I SAID  
YES.

Brooke



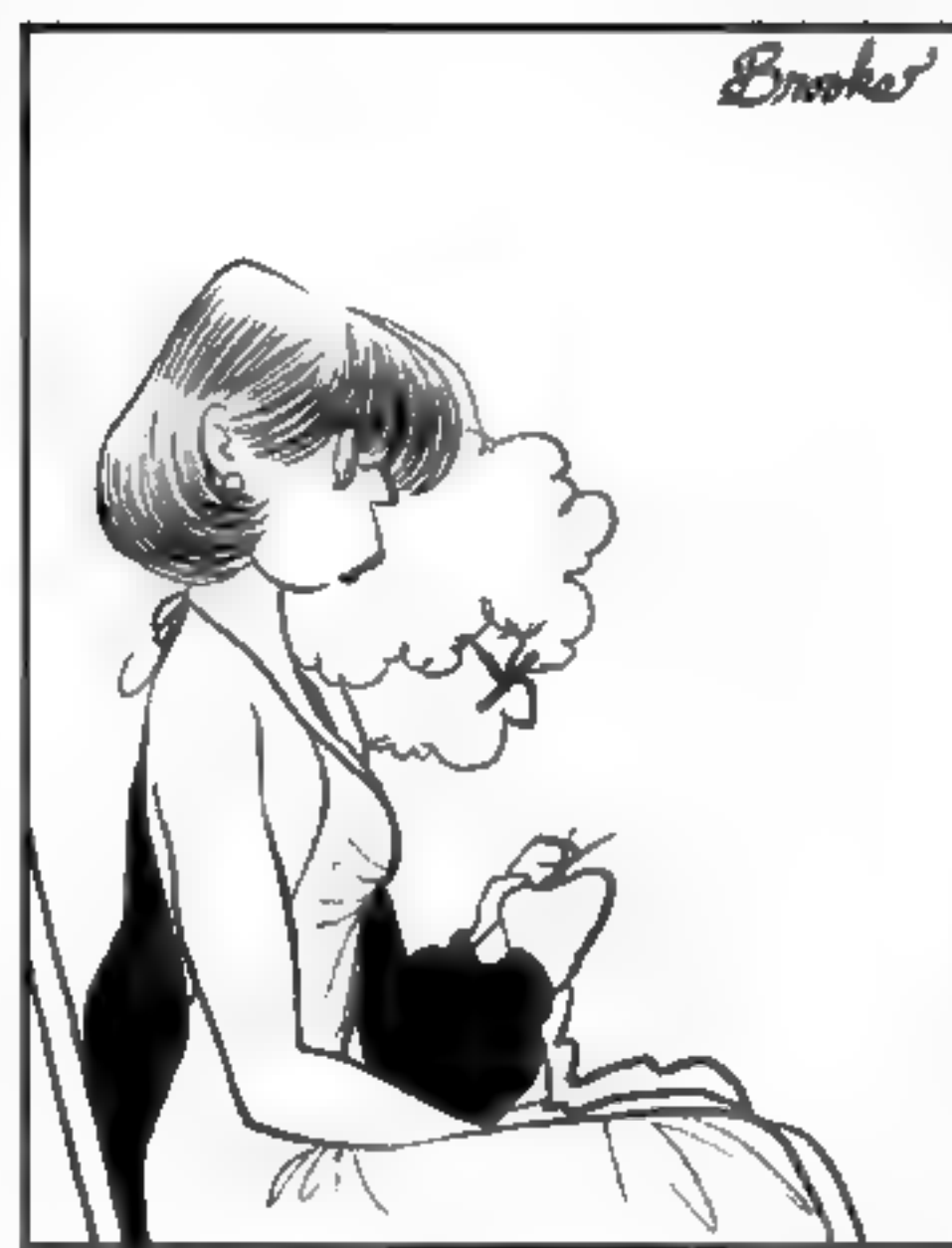
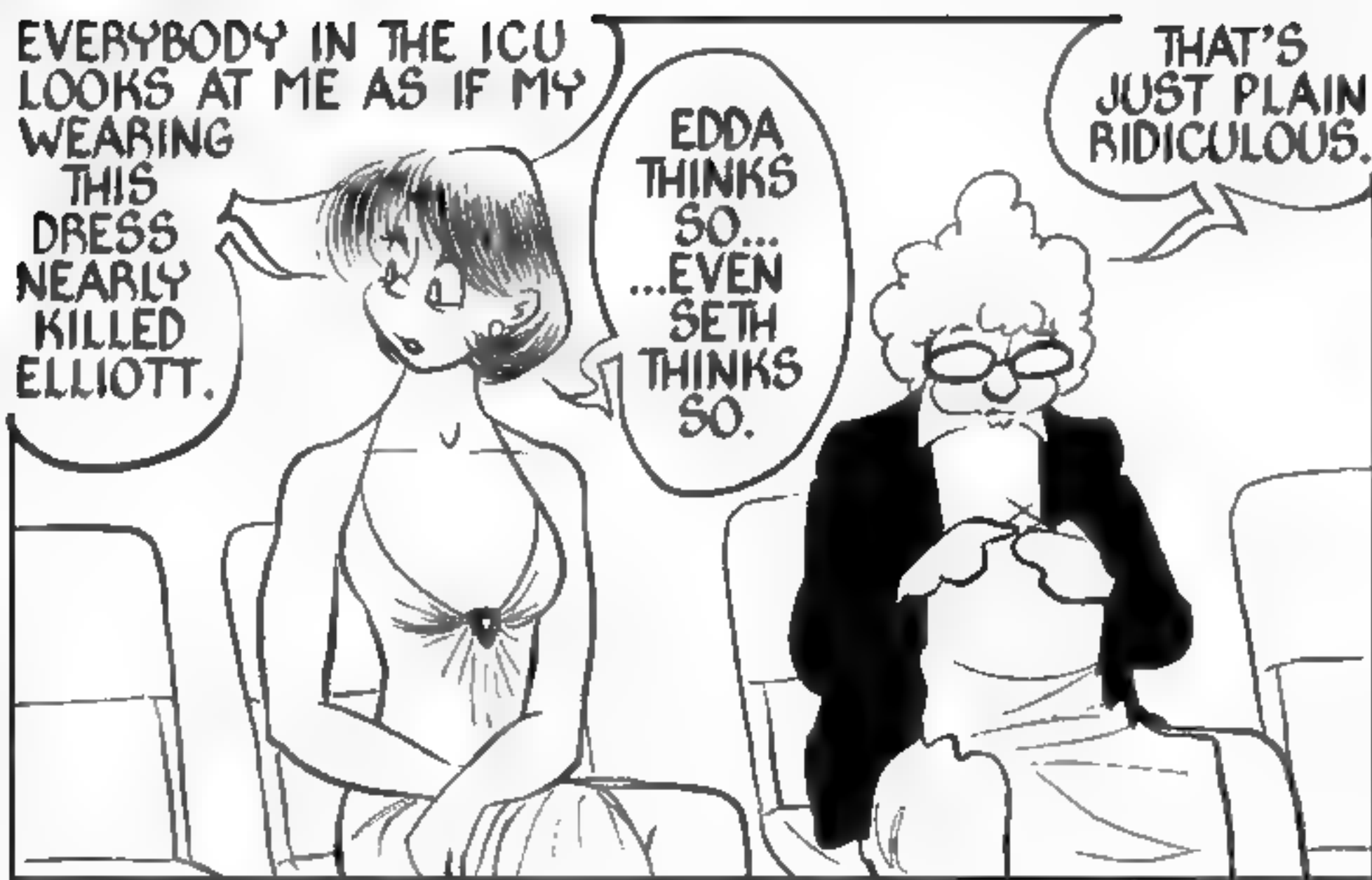
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WHEN  
I PUT ON  
THIS DRESS, IT  
WAS JUST FOR FUN...  
BUT WHEN PEOPLE  
SAW ME THIS EVENING,  
THEY THOUGHT OF  
ONLY ONE  
THING.

Brooke



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AND, NO, IT WAS NOT  
CONCEALED CAT TOYS.

SO NOW MOM'S CONVINCED  
SHE GAVE ELLIOTT CARDIAC  
ARRHYTHMIA WHEN SHE  
WORE MY LITTLE SHRINK-  
WRAP HALTER-TOP GOWN,  
THEN ACCEPTED HIS  
MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.



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IF YOU WORE THAT GOWN  
AND ACCEPTED ME, THEY'D  
FIND MY FETID, PUTRESCENT  
CORPSE RIGHT WHERE I  
STOOD, WITH A BEAMING  
SMILE WREATHED  
ACROSS MY  
OTHERWISE  
ROTTING  
FACE.



YOU'RE ALWAYS  
SO SWEET...  
...IN A FAINTLY  
NAUSEATING  
WAY.

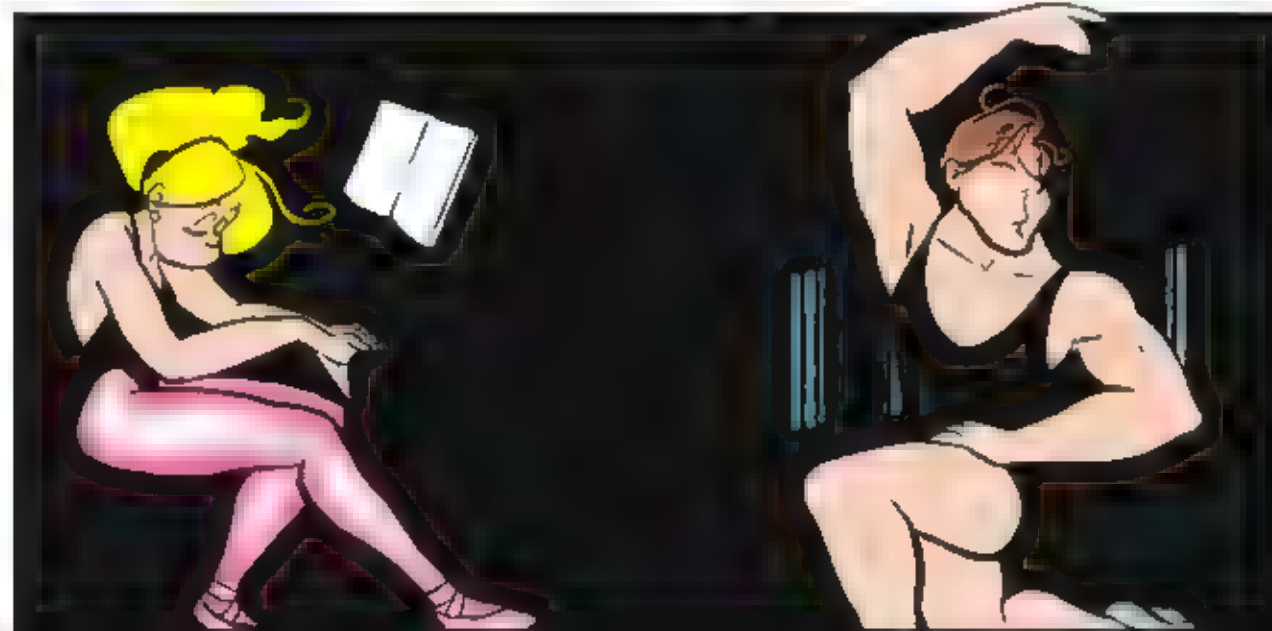
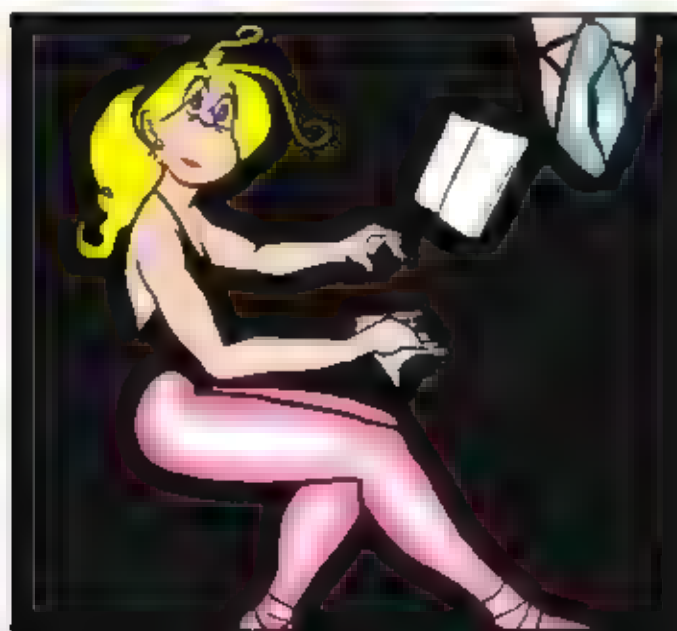
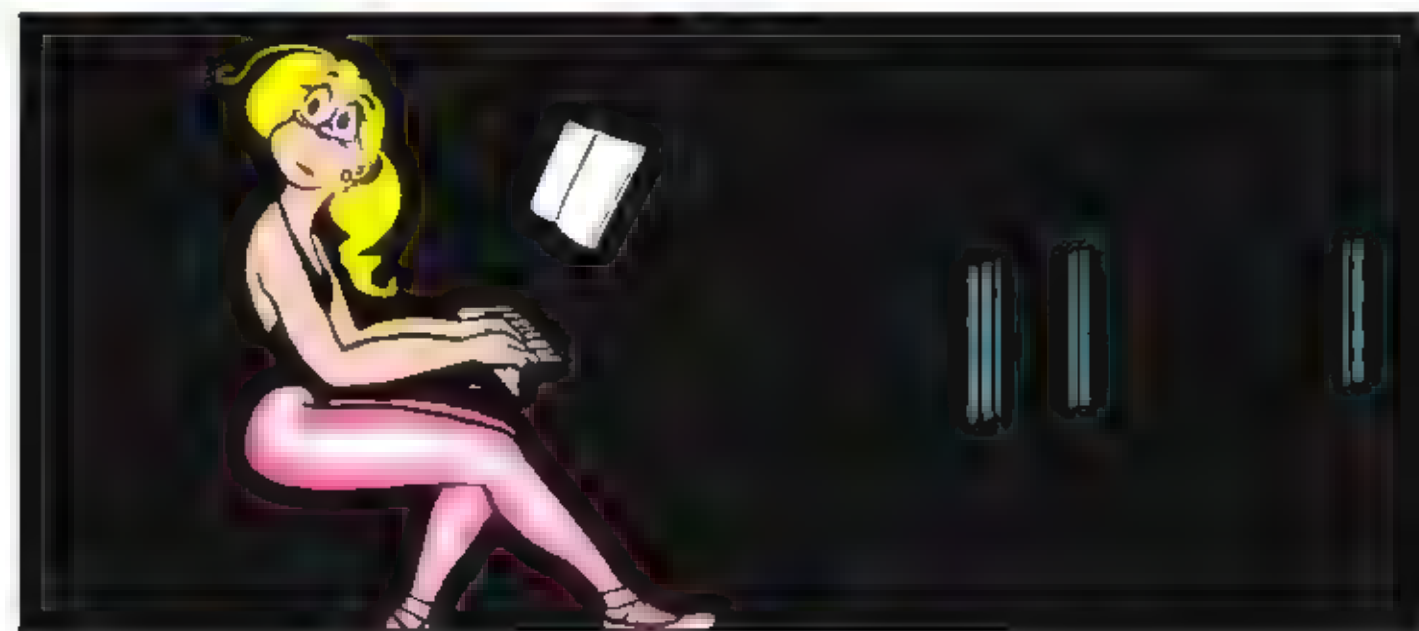


BOY, IF I HAD  
A PENNY FOR  
EVERY TIME  
I'VE HEARD  
THAT...

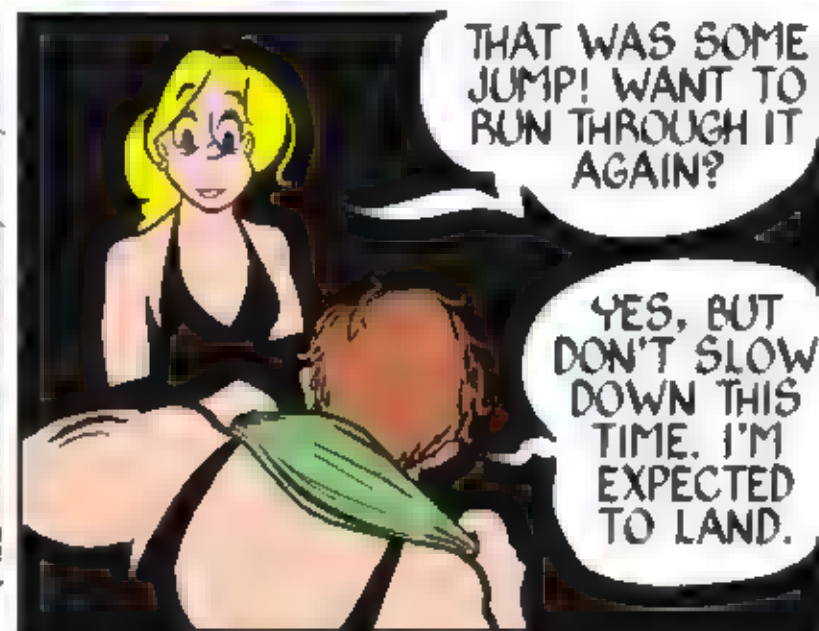
Brooke

# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

®



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DON'T GET ME WRONG...  
...I'M SURE YOUR DRESS  
AND THE WAY  
YOU LOOKED  
WOULD HAVE  
GIVEN ME  
PALPITATIONS...



WELL...

JUST NOT  
ARRHYTHMIA.

WHAT  
YOU'RE SAYING  
IS, I'M NOT AN  
ARRHYTHMIA  
SORT OF  
PERSON.



MAYBE NOT ARRHYTHMIA,  
BUT...I DON'T KNOW...  
SHALLOW BREATHING,  
GRAINY VISION?  
...NOSE-  
BLEED?



SPIRAL  
FRACTURES?

.....GINGIVITIS?

NOW YOU'RE  
JUST SWEET-  
TALKING ME.



I HAVE TO CONFESS TO SOME DISAPPOINTMENT THAT YOU DON'T THINK THE SIGHT OF ME IN A SEXY DRESS COULD GIVE YOU A DICKY HEART.



IT MAKES ME WONDER IF WE HAVE A FUTURE TOGETHER.

YOUR IDEA OF A FUTURE AND MY IDEA OF A FUTURE WOULD SEEM TO DIVERGE.



I DON'T FOLLOW.

MY IDEA OF LIFE WITH YOU INCLUDES MOVIES, LONG WALKS ON THE BEACH, GROWING OLD TOGETHER, SHUFFLEBOARD TOURNAMENTS IN FLORIDA. ...YOUR VISION OF OUR FUTURE TERMINATES IN FATAL VISUAL STIMULI.



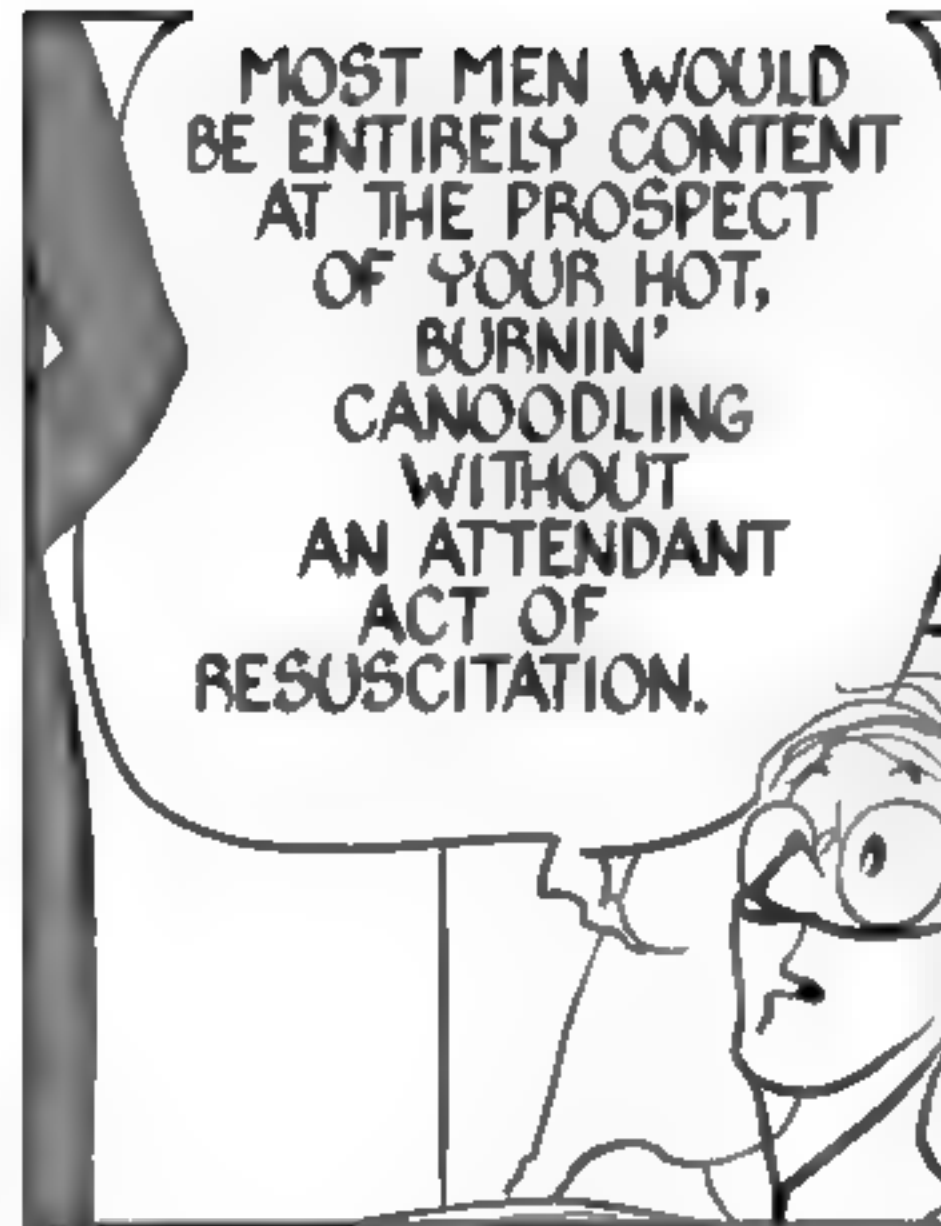
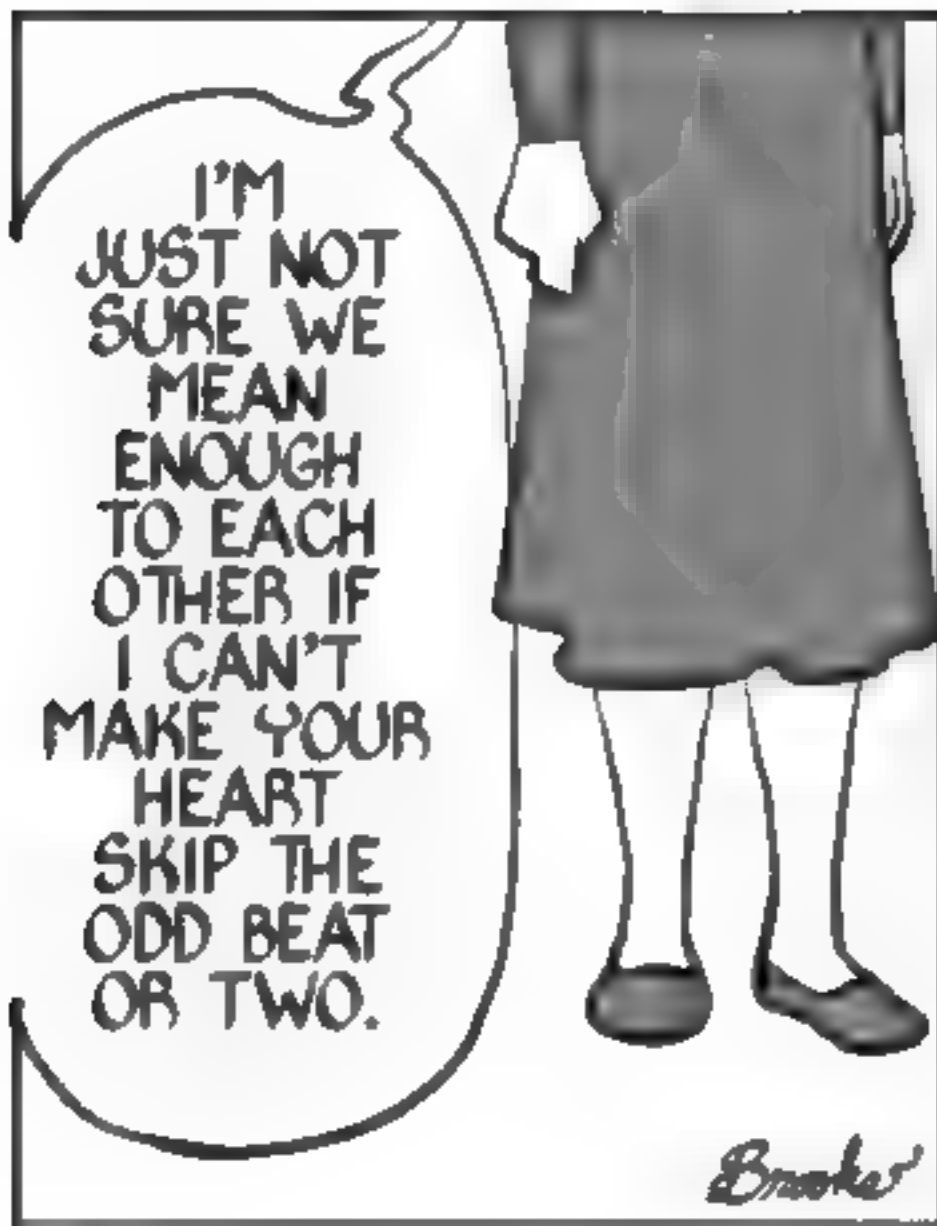
I CALL THAT DIVERGENCE.



PARDON ME FOR BEING AN IDEALIST.

*Brooke*







Brooke

YOU OBVIOUSLY FIND THIS  
WHOLE NOTION THAT YOU GAVE  
ME ARRHYTHMIA PERSONALLY  
GRATIFYING.

PEEP PEEP PEEP

BUT LET'S FACE IT, YOU  
MET ME IN AN EYE-  
BUGGING, SHRINK-WRAP  
GOWN AND GAVE ME A  
KISS. THE HEART STUFF  
WAS JUST A  
COINCIDENCE.

INCIDENTALLY...  
...WHAT DID YOU  
MEAN BY  
"YES"?

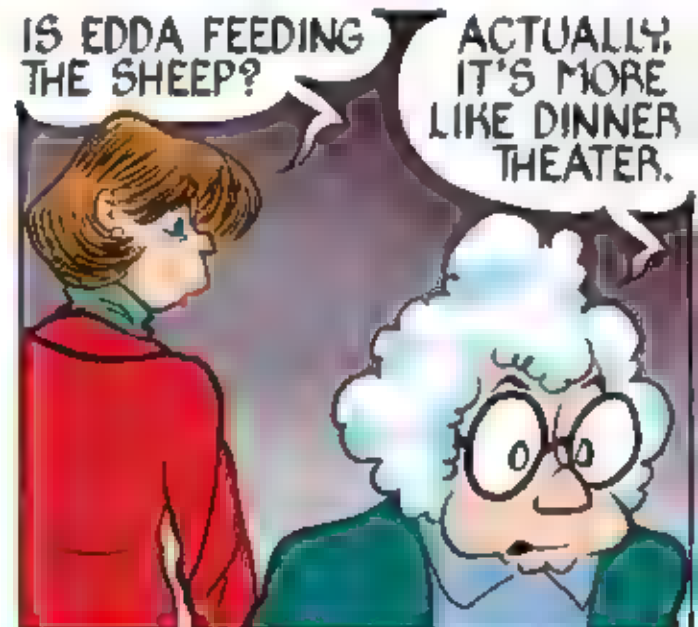
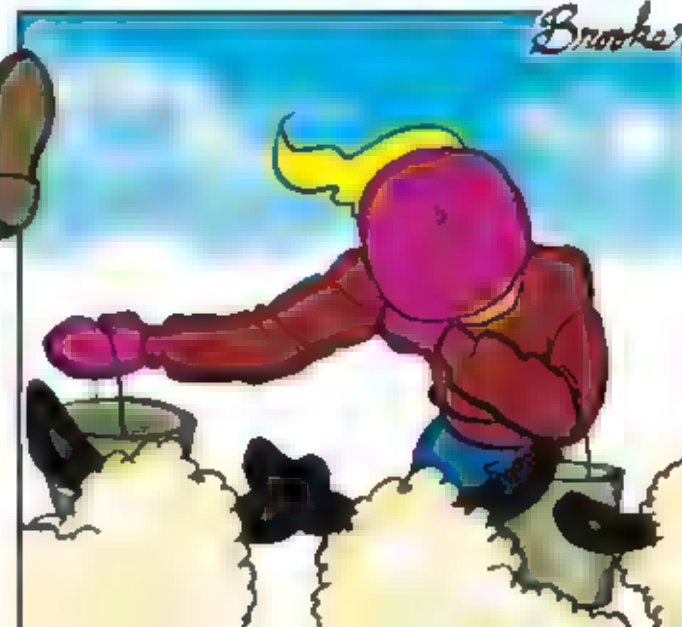


# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

®



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YOU MEAN, WHEN I MET  
YOU AT THE DOOR LAST  
NIGHT AND SAID "YES,"  
YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT  
I MEANT?

WHAT  
DID YOU  
MEAN?

PEEP PEEP  
PEEP

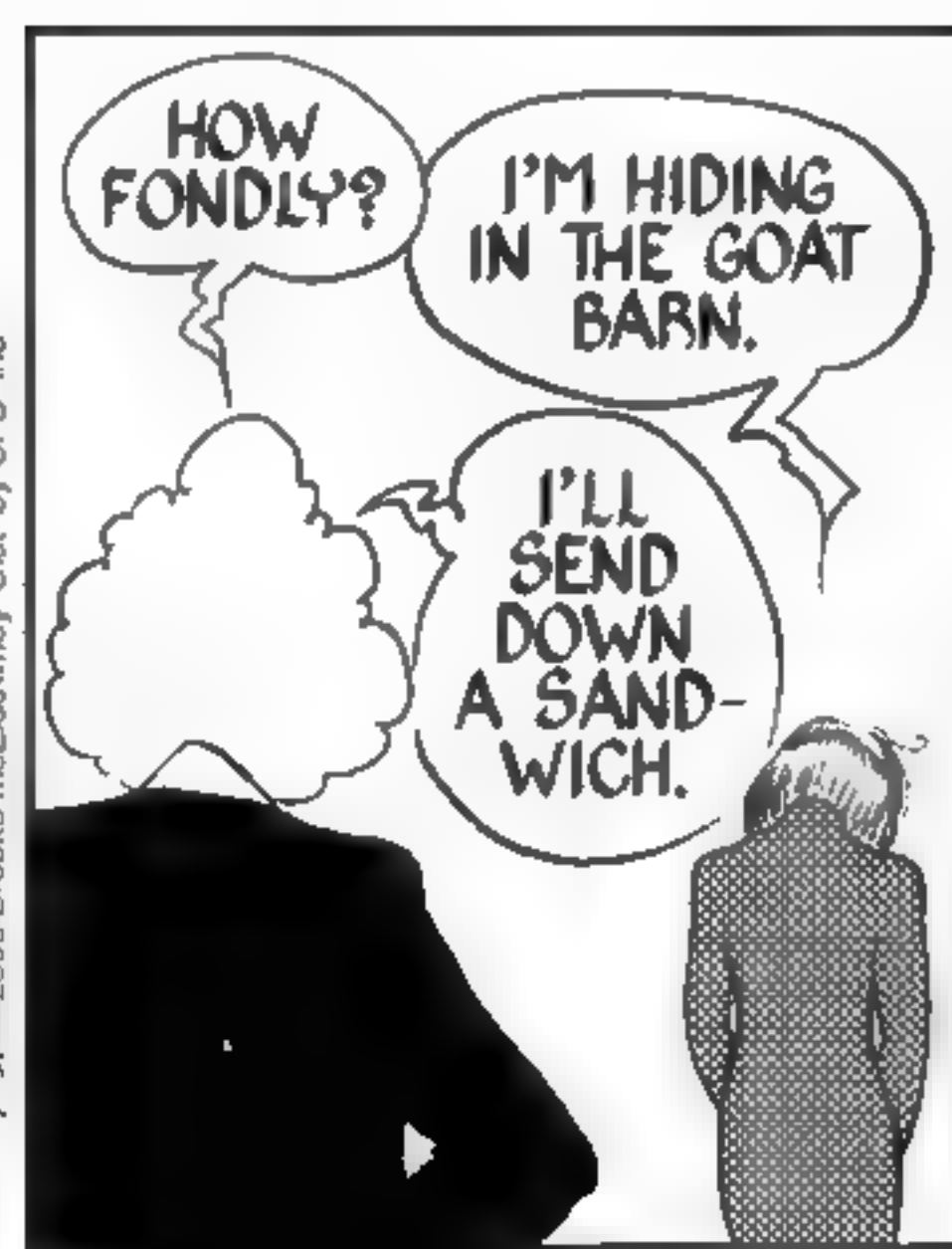
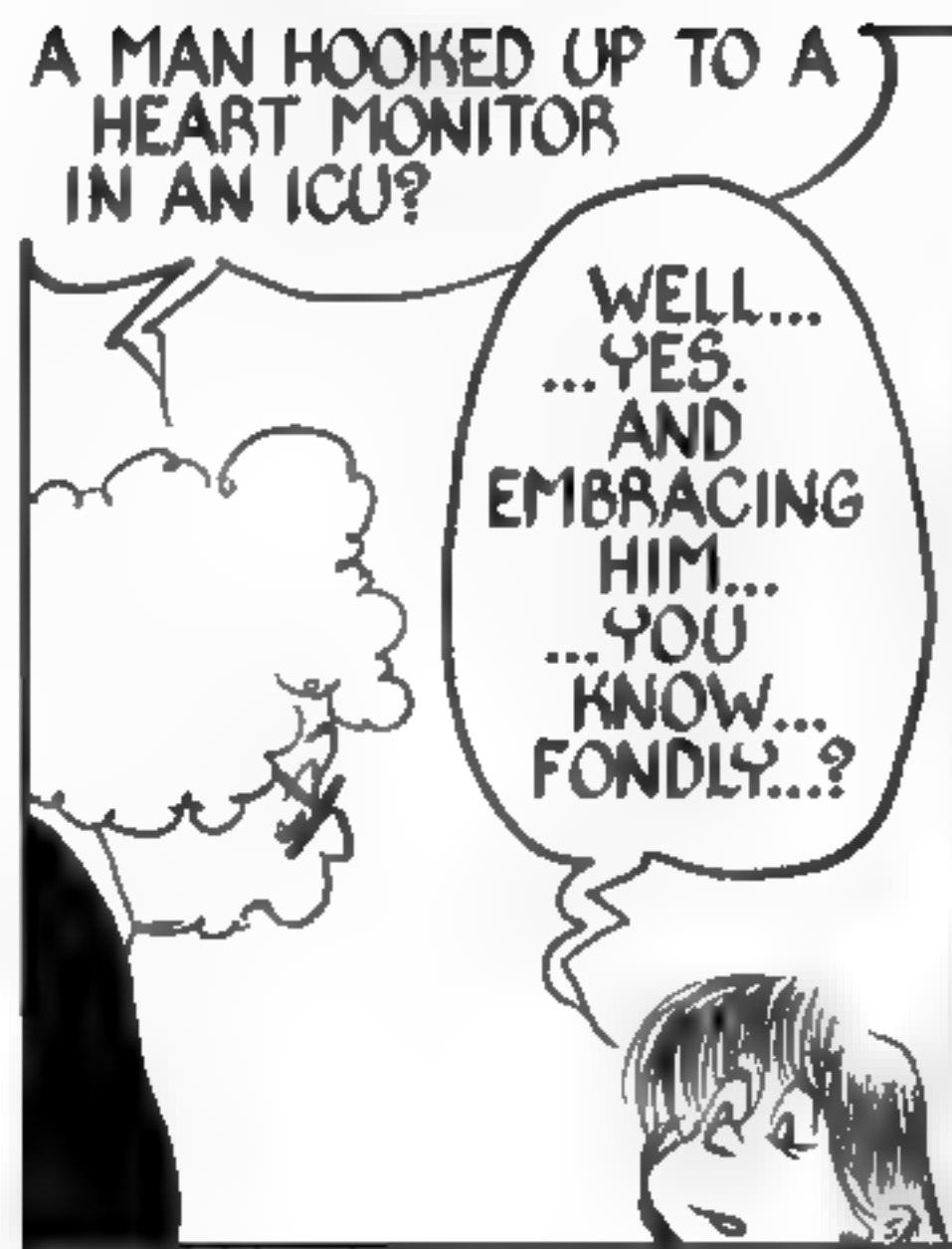
I MEANT YES, I'LL  
MARRY YOU.

PEEP  
PEEP PEEP  
PEEP

PEEP  
PEEP PEEP

*Brooke*

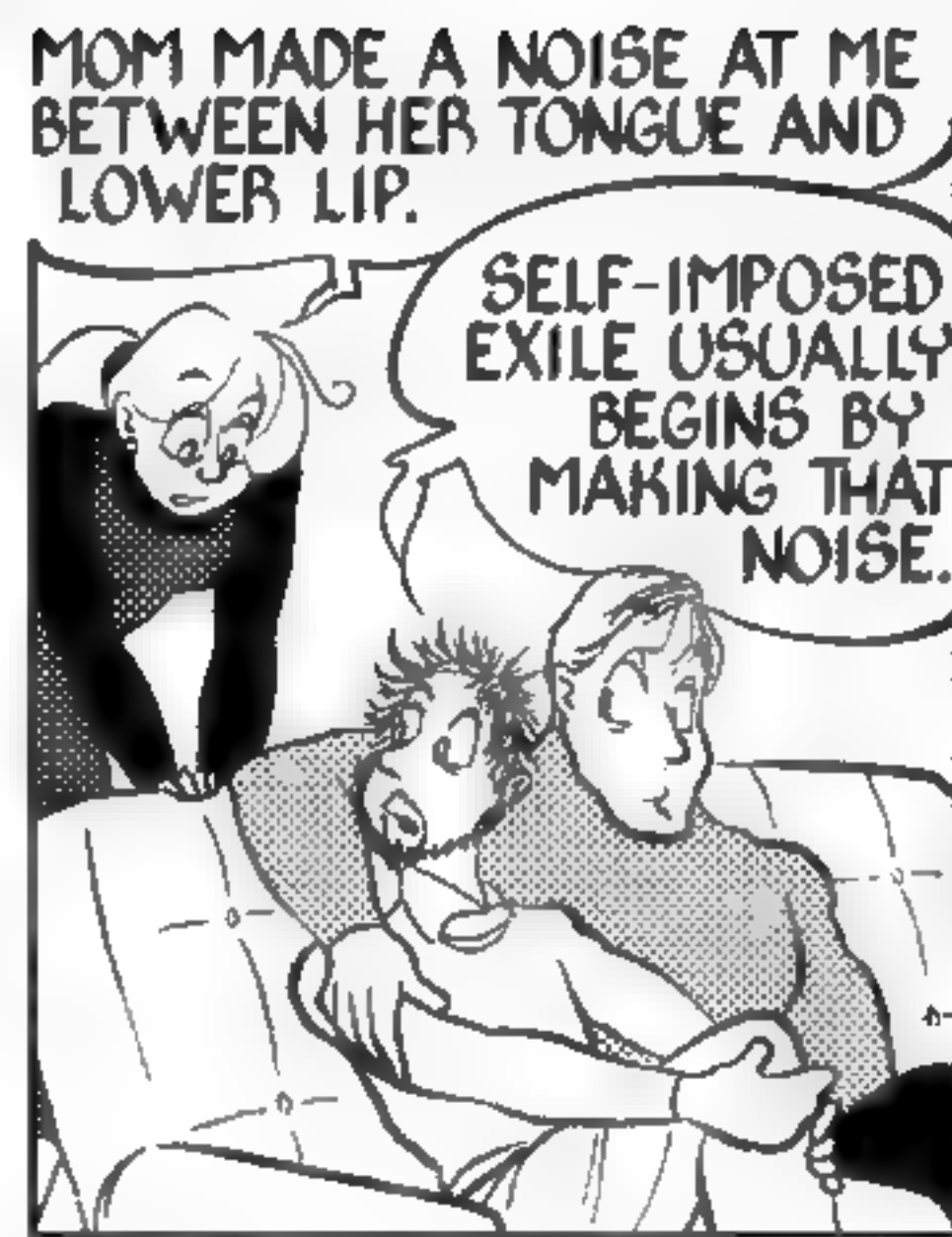
PEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE





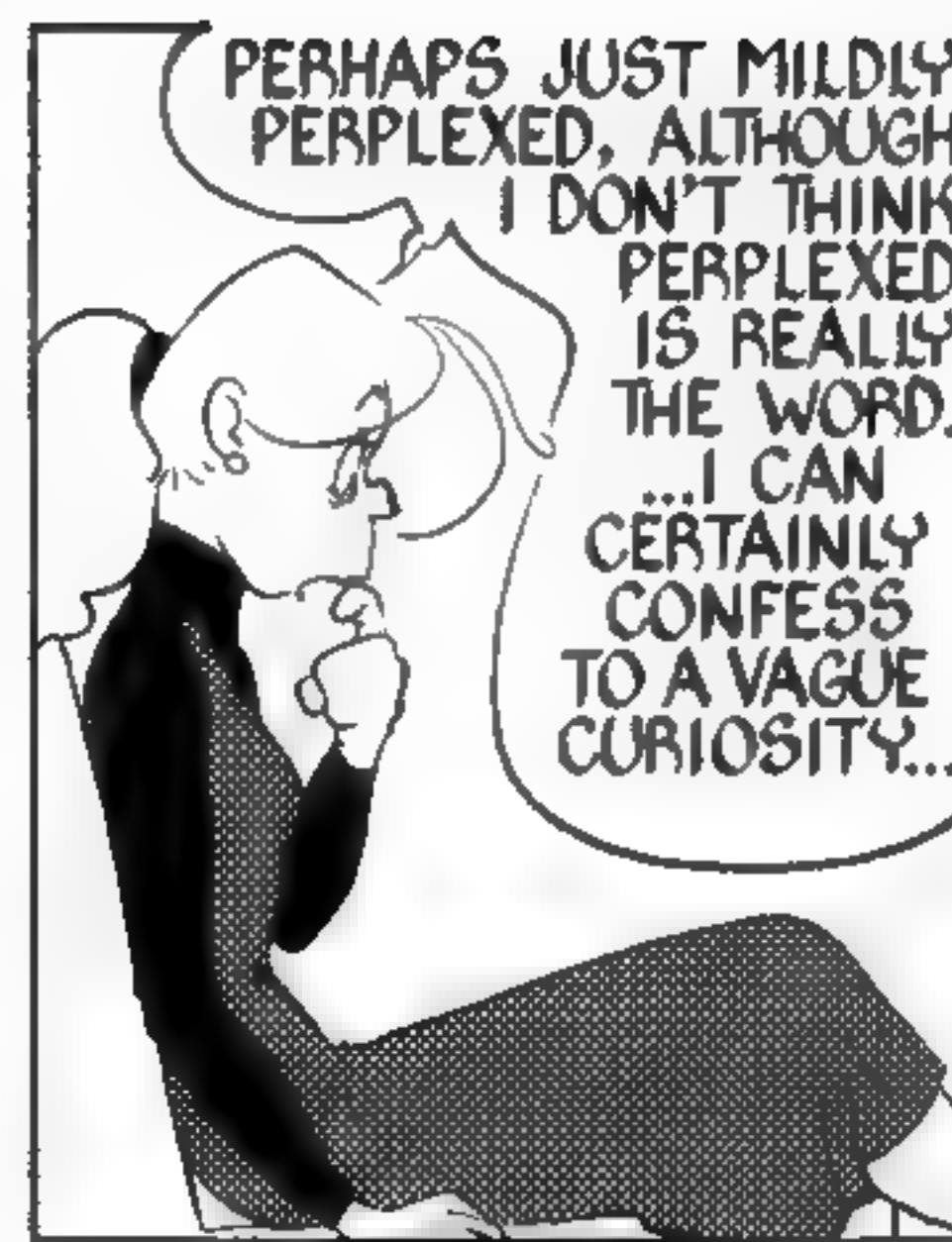


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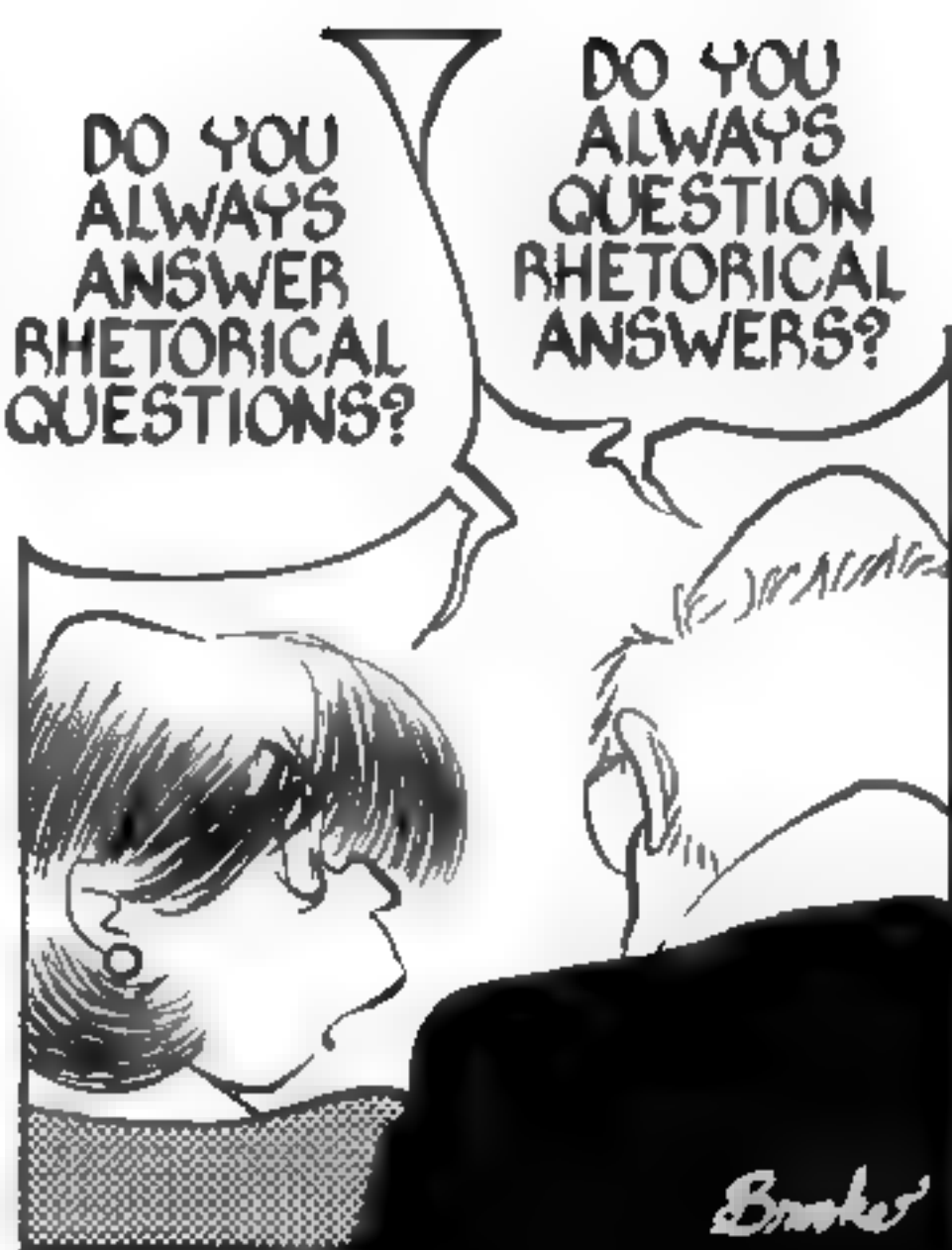
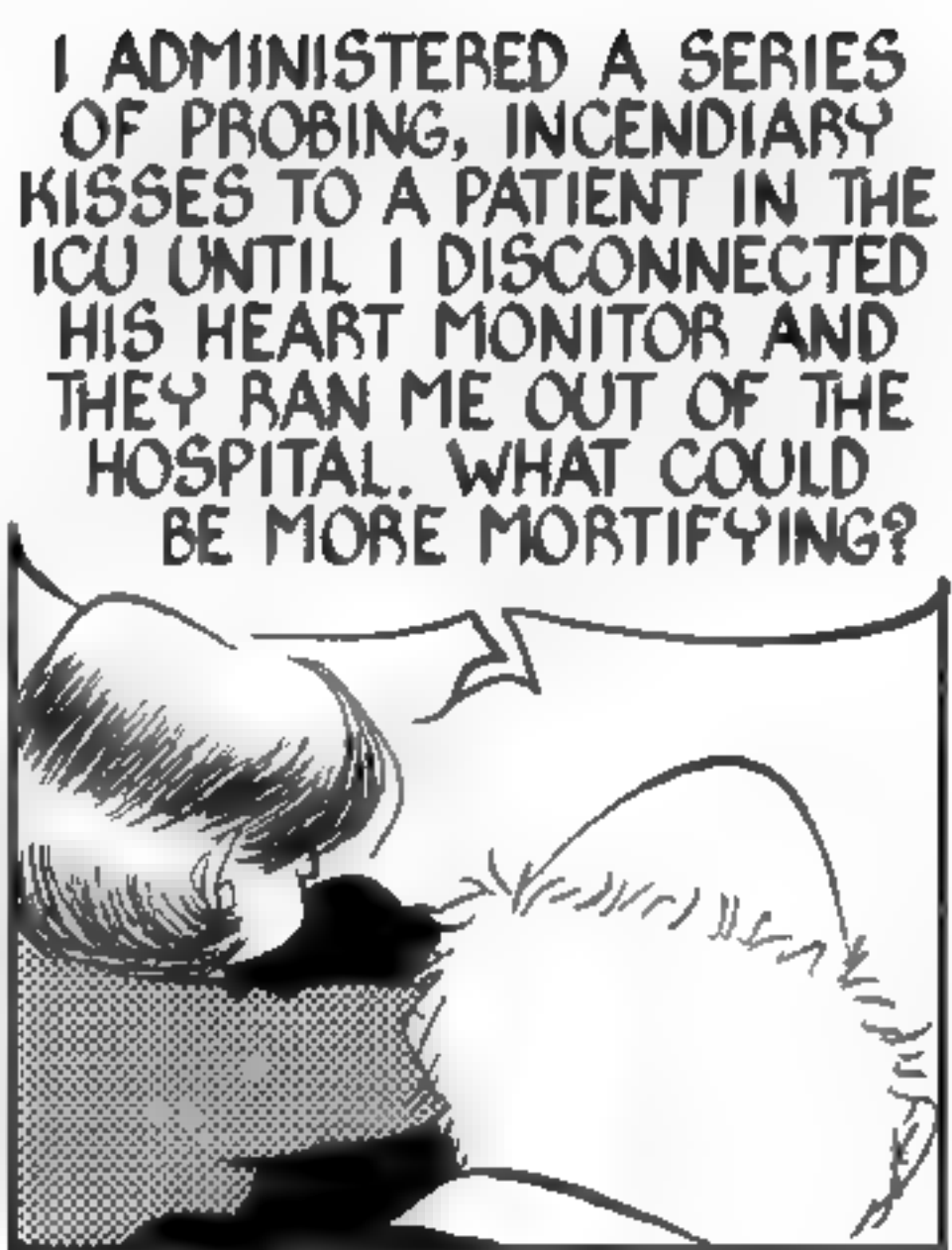


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YOU DON'T REALLY EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE FOR AN INSTANT THAT MY DERRIÈRE IS PROTRUDING THROUGH A QUANTUM RIFT INTO THE DELTA QUADRANT OF THE GALAXY.

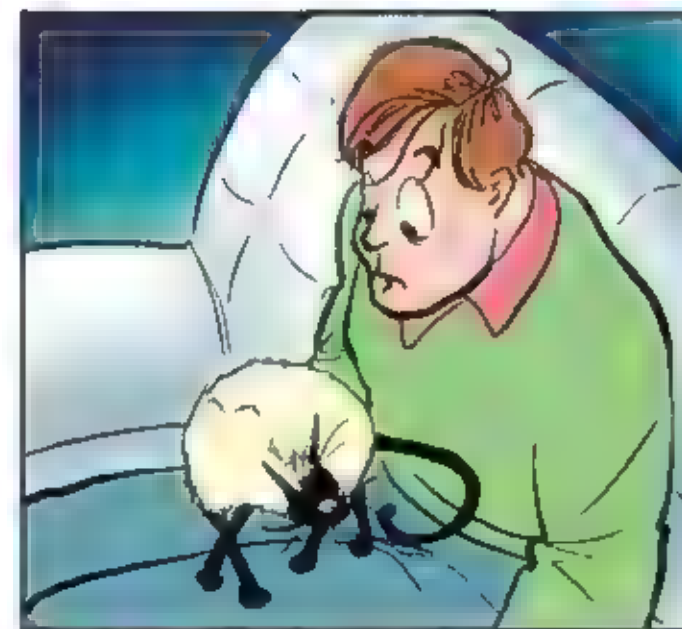
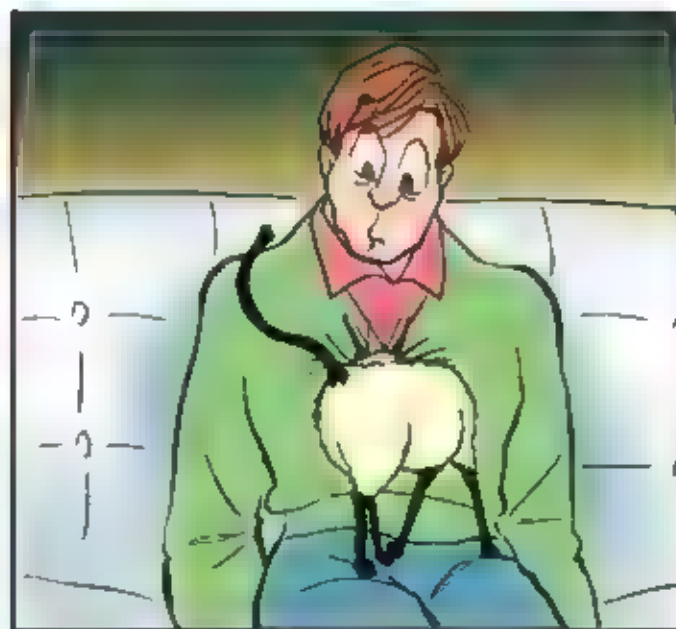
TO RESIST THE TRUTH IS PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE. WE ALL DO IT AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. ...BUT EVENTUALLY YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE THE DRAFT.

AND THEN, OF COURSE, THERE'S THE GRAFFITI...

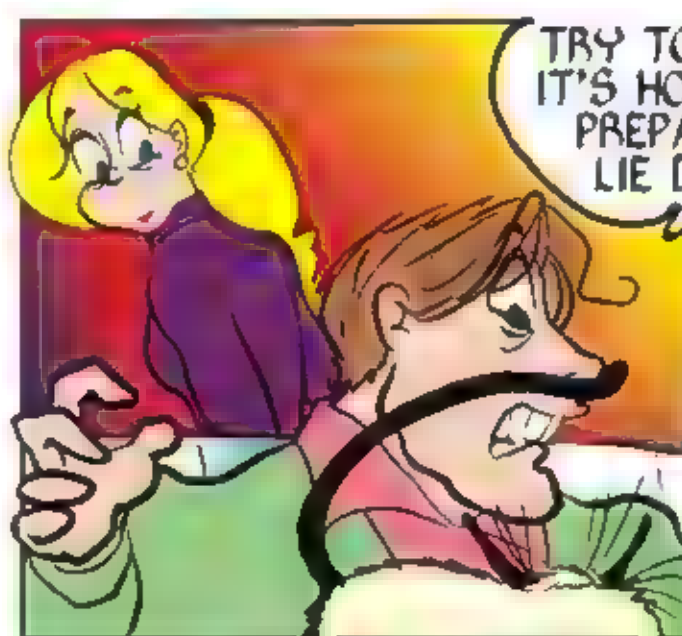
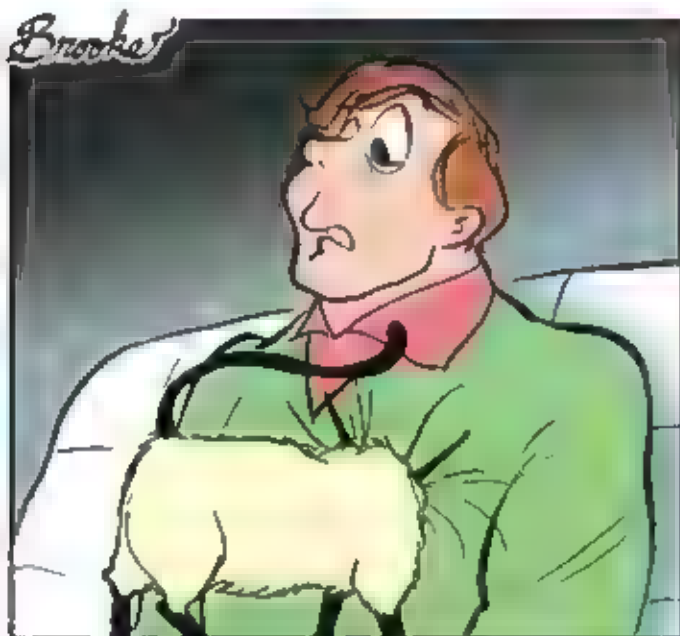
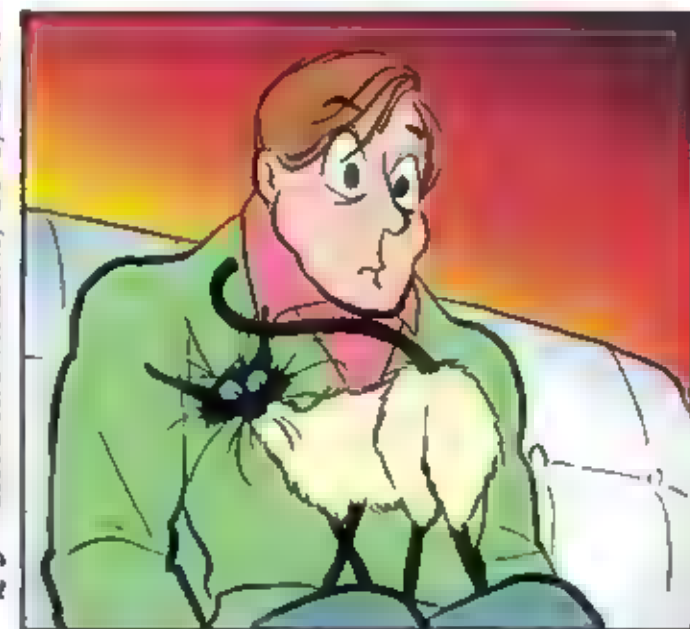
WHEN WILL MY PENANCE CEASE?

...FOLLOWED BY THE TARGET PRACTICE...

# 9 CHICKWEED LANE



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OH, HELLO, ELLIOTT. DID THEY  
RELEASE YOU FROM THE  
ICU?

I YANKED OFF  
THE ELECTRODES  
AND BOLTED.  
LAST I SAW,  
THE GUY  
WITH THE  
ELECTRIC  
PADDLES  
WAS  
LOOKING  
FOR ME  
UNDER  
MY BED.

WHAT'S  
UP?

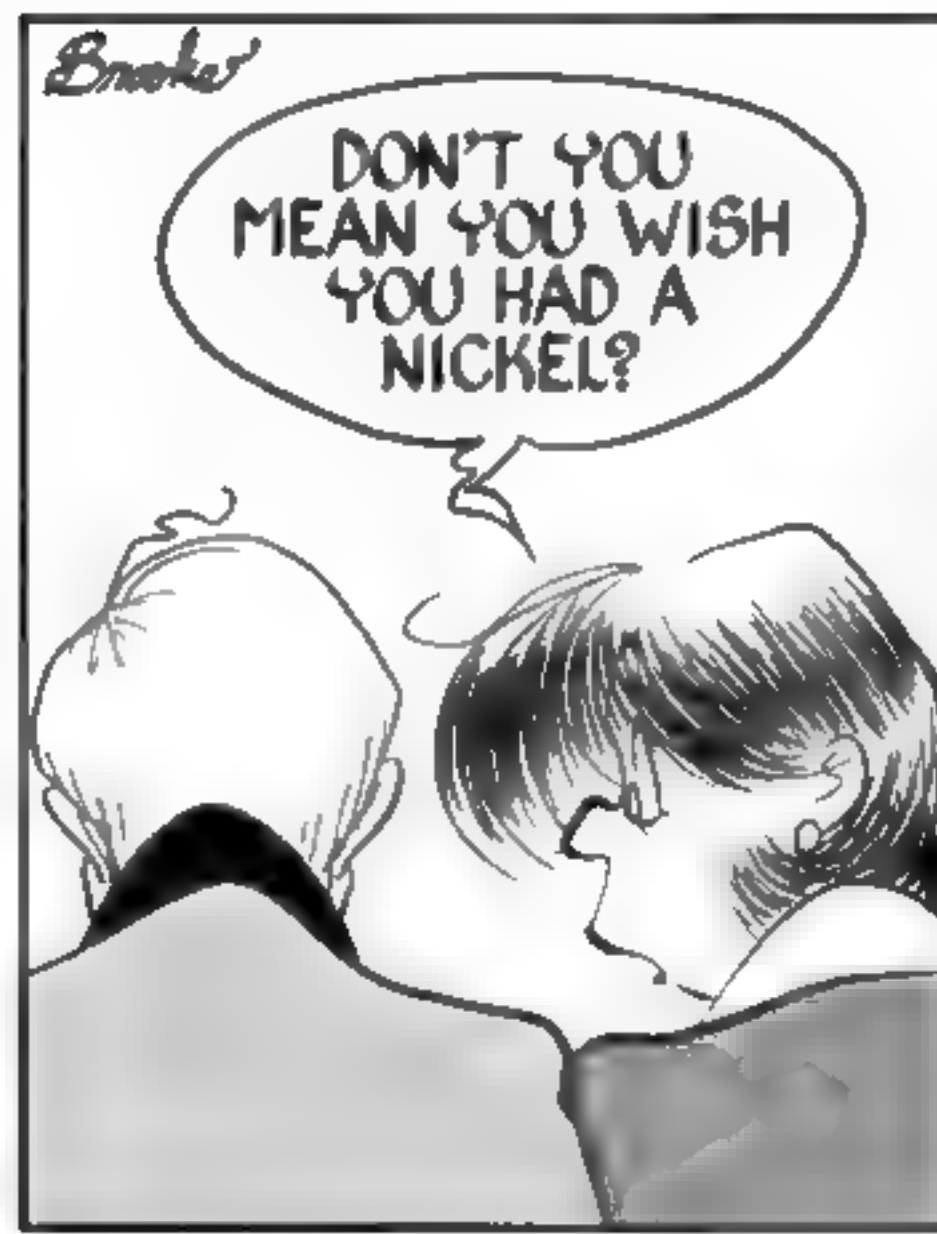
NOTHING MUCH...  
...OTHER THAN  
THAT I APPEAR TO  
BE SITTING ON A  
QUANTUM ANOMALY  
SUCH THAT MY  
POSTERIOR IS  
APPEARING IN  
THE NIGHT  
SKY IN  
SOME  
REMOTE  
QUAD-  
RANT  
OF THE GAL-  
AXY.



*Brooke*

SOME  
QUADRANTS  
HAVE ALL  
THE LUCK.





YOU MUST KNOW I'M SINCERE IN MY PROPOSAL. HOW MANY MEN WOULD WILLINGLY SIT IN GOAT DUNG NEXT TO YOU?

42



RIGHT AWAY, WITHOUT HESITATION, YOU CAN STATE THE PRECISE NUMBER?

WELL...  
...COUNTING  
YOU, IT'S  
43.

EVER SINCE I TOOK UP FARMING, I'VE BECOME KIND OF THE SCARLETT O'HARA OF THE UNGULATE SET.

DO  
YOU TAKE  
RESERVATIONS,  
OR DO THEY  
JUST SEAT  
THEMSELVES?





WHAT ELSE  
DO YOU  
GET UP  
TO IN  
HERE?!

JEALOUSY IS  
AN UNSAVORY  
TRAIT IN  
ANYBODY'S  
PERSONALITY.



AH, A LOVERS'  
SPAT...I THINK  
I'LL EXIT  
VIA THE  
SPARE  
QUANTUM  
RIFT.

I DON'T  
EVEN  
REMEMBER  
WHY I  
CAME  
HERE!



TO ASK DR. BURBER FOR HER  
HAND IN MATRIMONY,  
I BELIEVE.

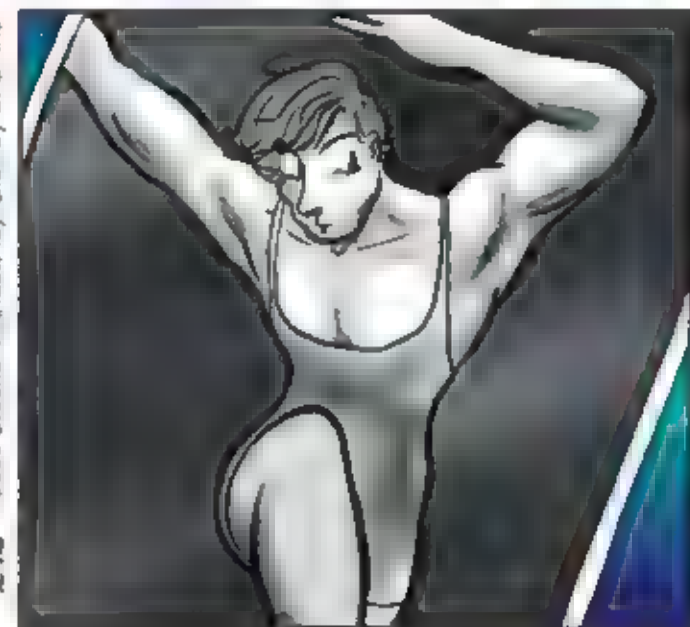
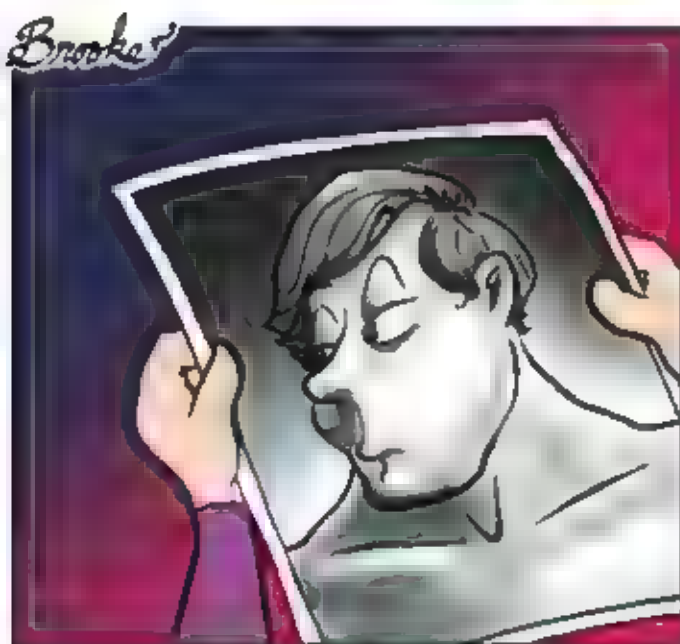
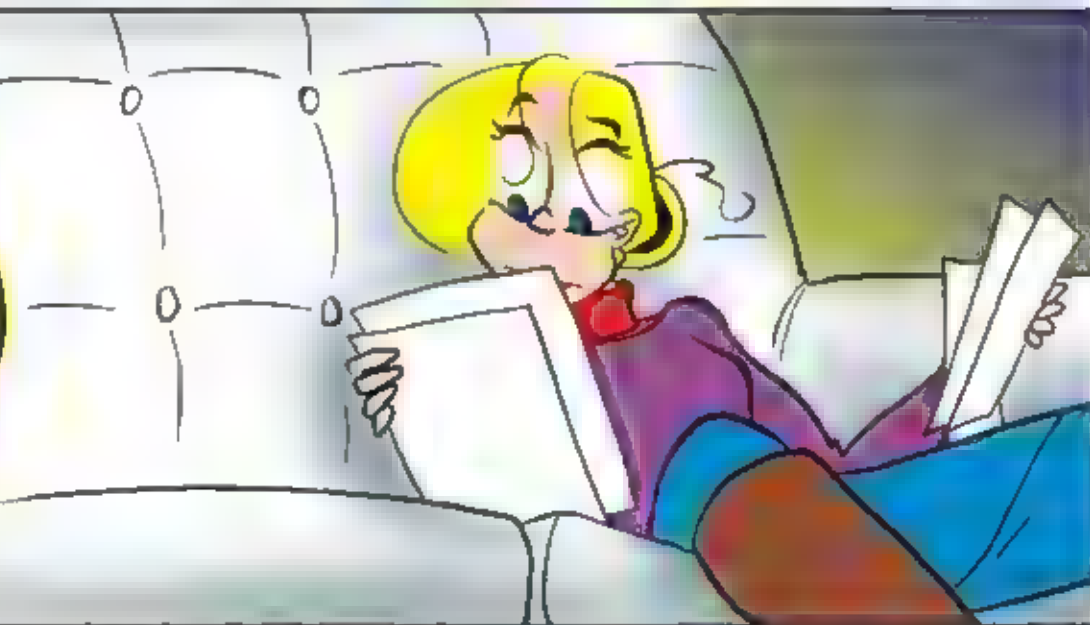
AND  
I ALREADY  
SAID YES  
TO THAT!



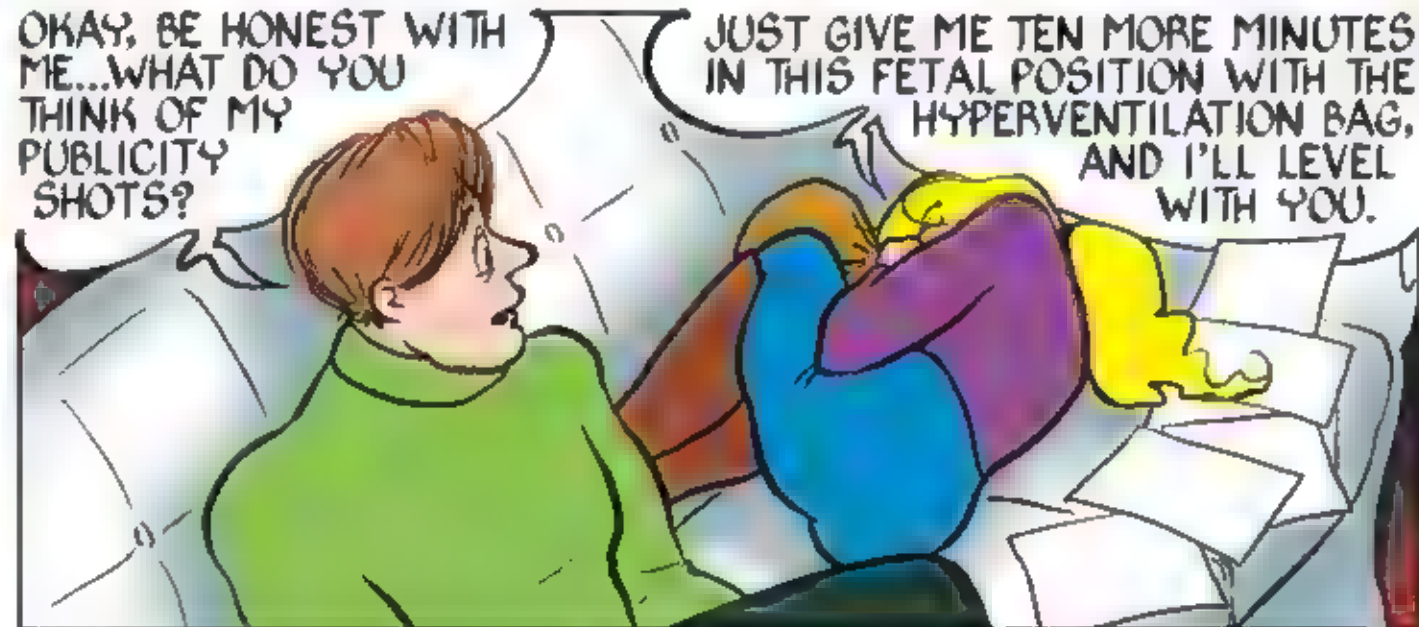
I ADMIT IT SEEMS QUIET  
IN THERE, MY DEARS, BUT  
TRUST ME...THEY ARE  
STILL SETTling  
THEIR  
DIFFERENCES.







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OKAY, BE HONEST WITH ME...WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY PUBLICITY SHOTS?

JUST GIVE ME TEN MORE MINUTES IN THIS FETAL POSITION WITH THE HYPERVENTILATION BAG, AND I'LL LEVEL WITH YOU.

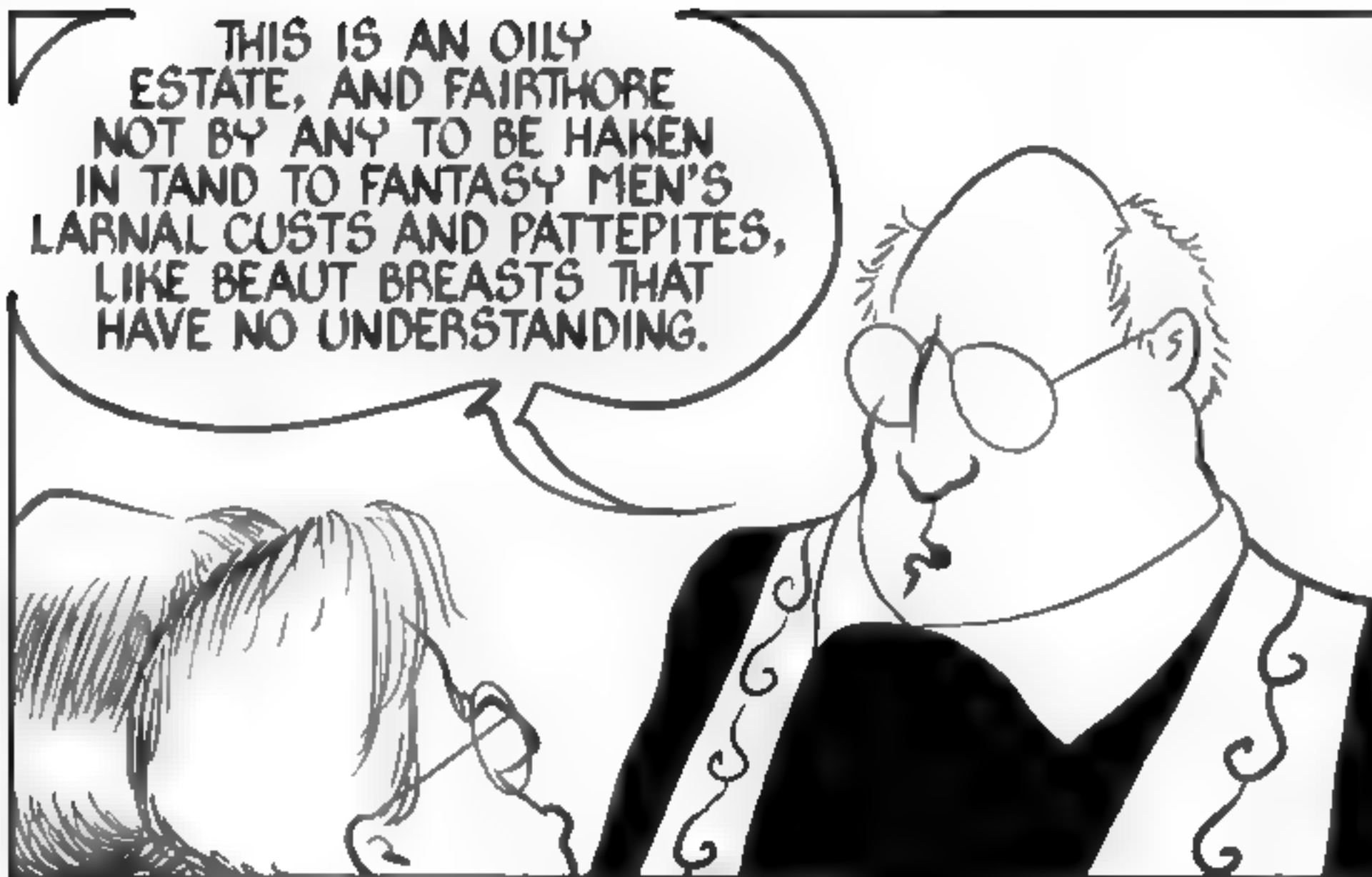


Brooks

NEARLY BELOVED...WE ARE  
TETHERED TO GATHER HERE IN  
THE LIGHT OF SOD, AND IN THE  
ESSENCE OF THIS PROLONGATION,  
TO JOIN THIS WOMB AND THIS  
MAMMON IN HOUNDS OF  
MOLEY BATRIMONY.

I'M RECITING  
FROM MEMORY.

WHO'DA  
THUNK?






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WILT THOU, ELLIOTT, HAVE THIS MAMMON  
TO THY WIDDED WEF? HILT THOU WOVE  
HER, ROQUEFORT HER, CONQUER HER  
IN HICKNESS AND IN STEALTH;  
AND SOREFAKING ALL OTHERS,  
HEAP THEE ONLY ONTO HER,  
SO LONG AS YE BOTH  
SHALL LIVE?

*Brooks*



WHAT DO  
I SAY?

I THINK THE  
TRADITIONAL  
RESPONSE IS,  
"WHY ILL."

WITH THIS WING I THEE RED,  
WITH MY WODDY I WEE  
THURSHIP, AND WITH  
ALL MY GURLDLY  
WOODS I DEE  
ENTHOW.

Brooke

YOU'RE  
REALLY GETTING  
INTO THE SPIRIT  
OF THIS.

*Brooke*

I TAKE THEE TO MY WELDED HUSBAND,  
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD FROM THIS  
FRAY DOORWARD,  
FOR WETTER OR  
BURSE, FOR  
PITCHER FOR  
ROARER,  
IN HICKNESS  
AND IN  
STEALTH,  
TILL BETH  
US DO  
DART.



WHO'S  
BETH?

DON'T  
EVEN  
GET ME  
STARTED.





# 9 CHICKWEED LANE



SO BALLET DANCING MUST BE A LOT OF FUN. WHAT'S IT LIKE?



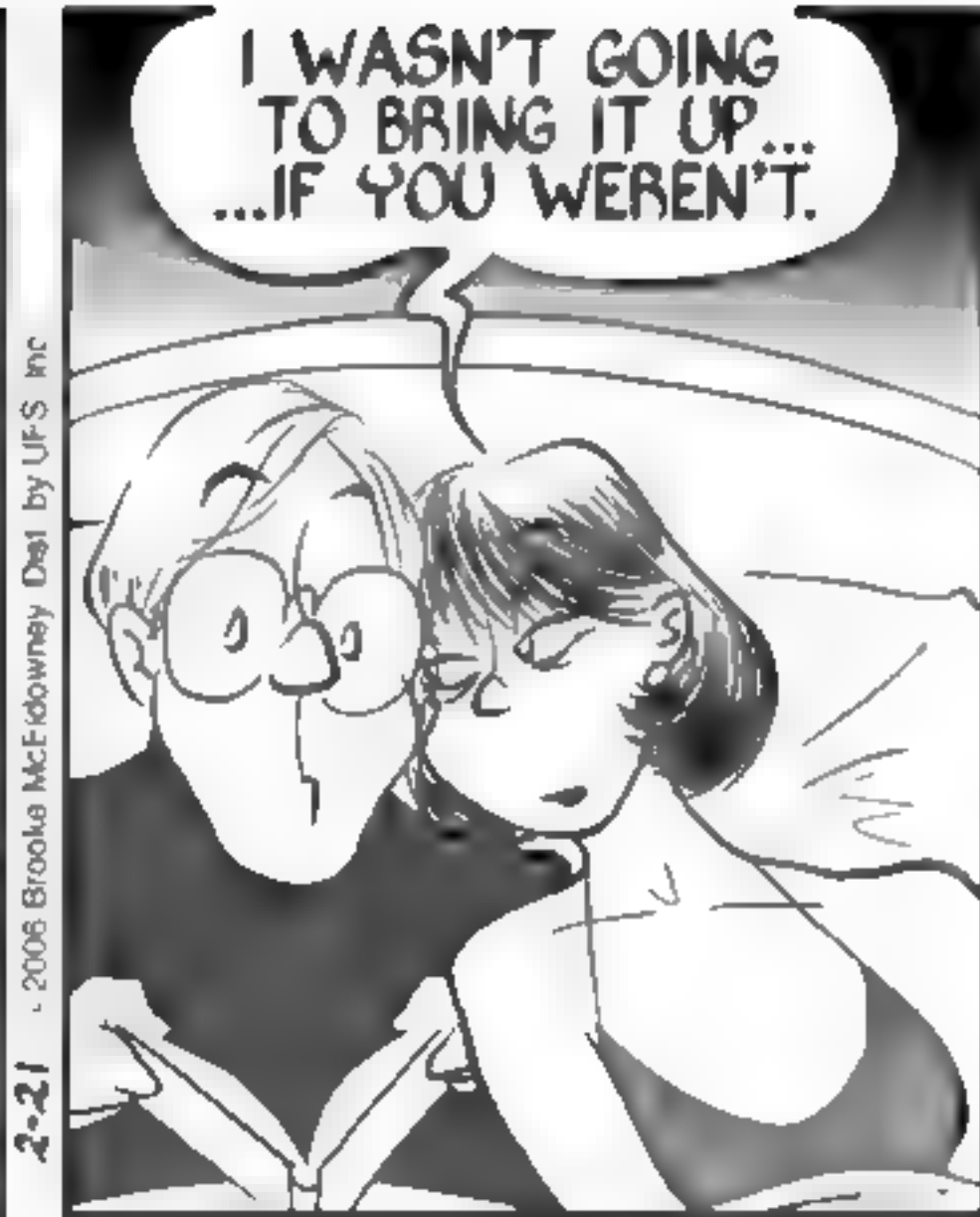
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FORASMUCH AS YOU HAVE CONSENTED  
TO TETHER IN WOOLY HEADLOCK, AND  
HAVE ECLAIRÉD THE SAME BY GIVING  
AND RECEIVING OF A PING, AND BY  
HANDLING OF JOINS: I RENOUNCE  
YOU HUSBAND AND WIFE.  
...THOSE WHOM SOD HATH  
GROUND TO  
THUNDER  
LET NO  
MAN PUT  
TOGETHER.

YOU MAY  
NOW DROP TO  
THE GROUND  
AND DO  
TWENTY.







WELL, SHOULDN'T WE HAVE  
SIGNED SOMETHING?...YOU  
KNOW...TO SHOW  
WE'VE WED?

THORAX  
SAID  
SPITTING  
IN OUR  
HANDS  
AND  
SHAKING  
ON IT  
WAS  
GOOD  
ENOUGH.

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BUT DO YOU THINK  
WE'RE MARRIED?

AMBIGUOUSLY...  
...TILL DEATH  
US DO PART.

Brooke

SO, IS THIS OUR  
HONEYMOON?

LOSE  
THE COPY OF  
"THE HOUSE AT POOH  
CORNER," AND WE'LL  
EXPLORE THE  
CONCEPT.



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Brooke



*Brooke*

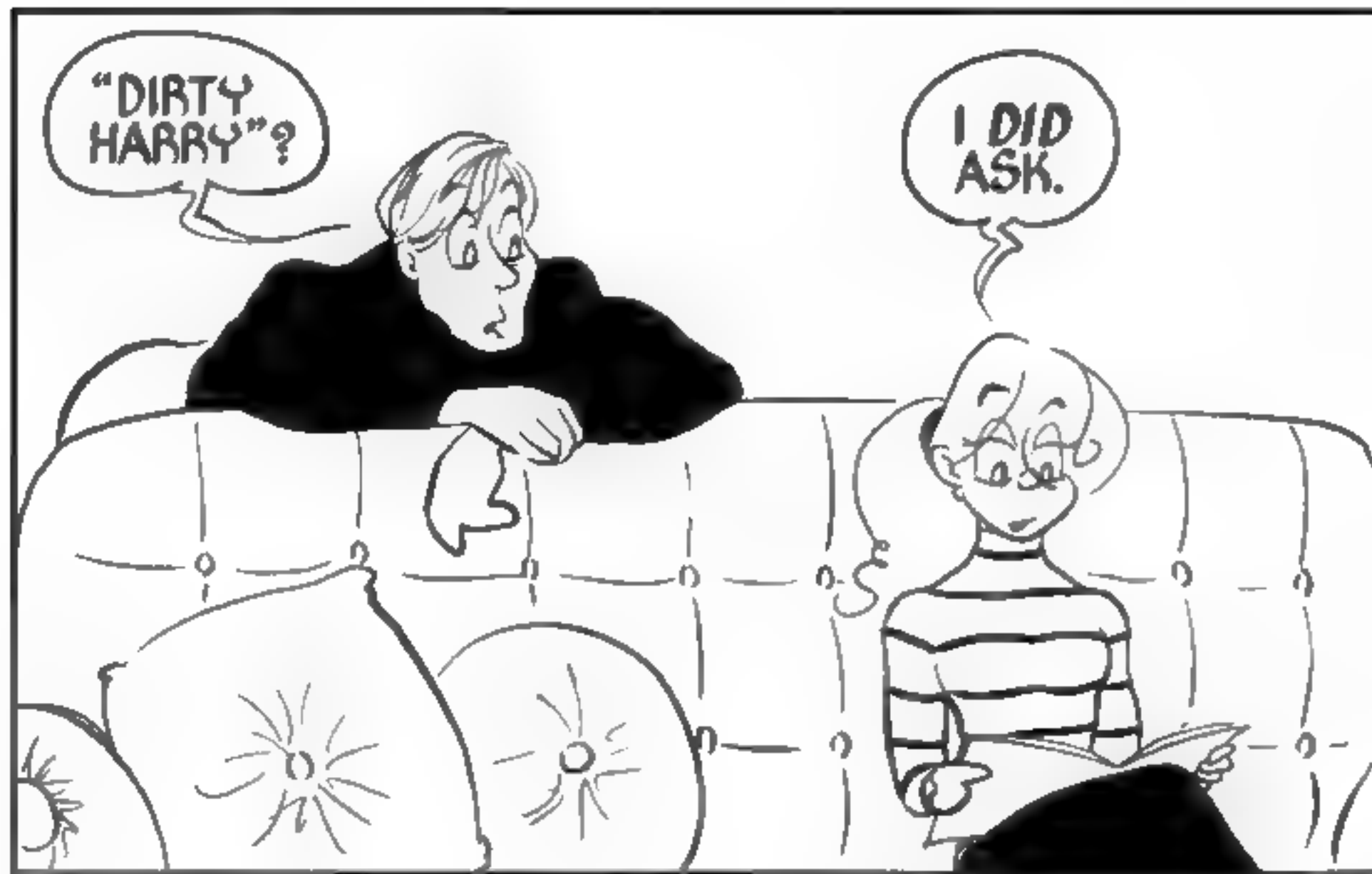


WELL, ELLIOTT, I HAVE TO  
SAY I'M SURPRISED YOU  
TWO FINALLY GOT SPLICED,  
BUT CONGRATULATIONS.  
WHAT WOULD  
YOU LIKE  
ME TO  
CALL  
YOU  
NOW?



Brooke

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~

~

HALLMARKS  
OF FELINITY:  
POINT OF VIEW

~

A HAIR

~

A HAIR

~

A HAIR

~

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A HAIR

~

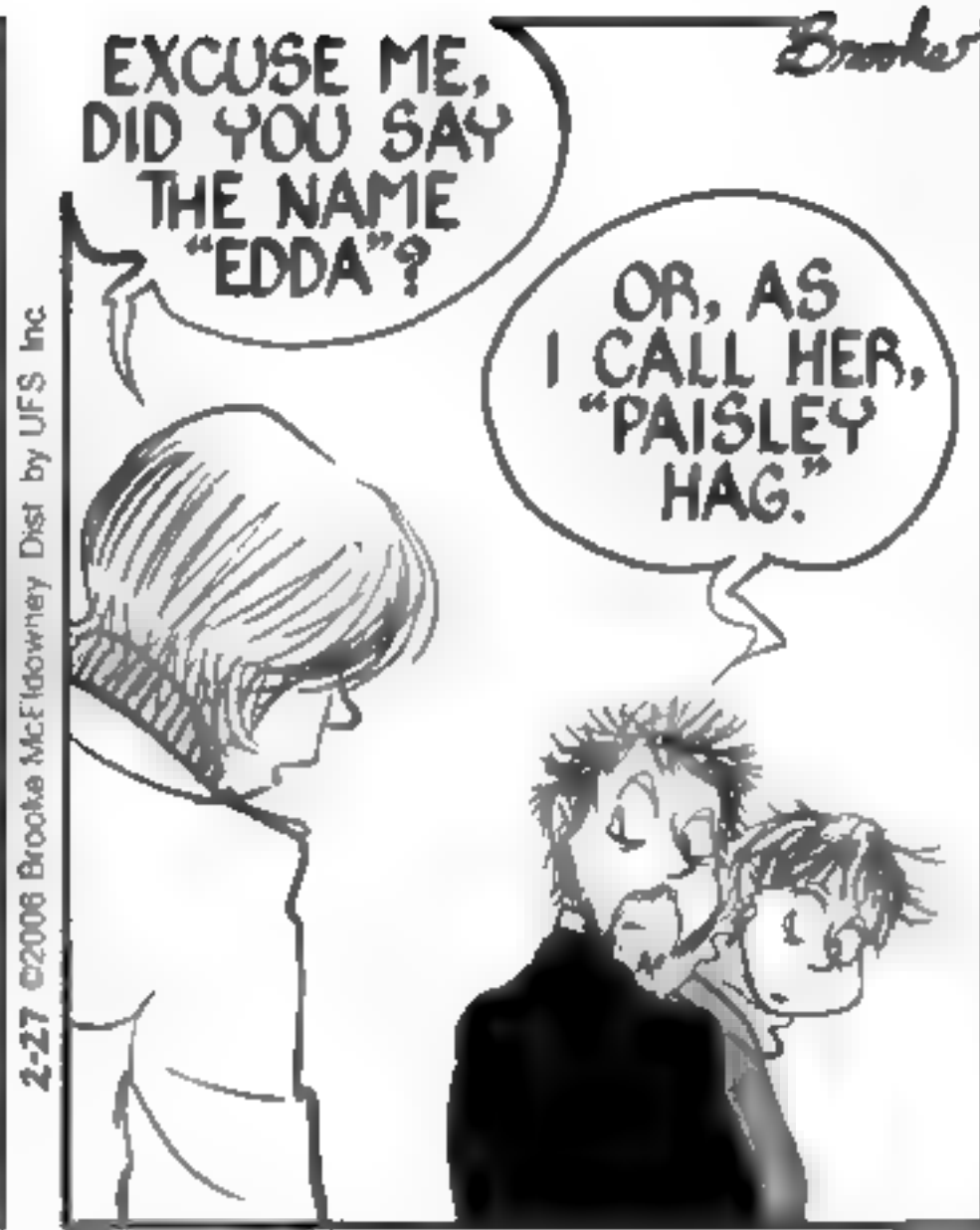
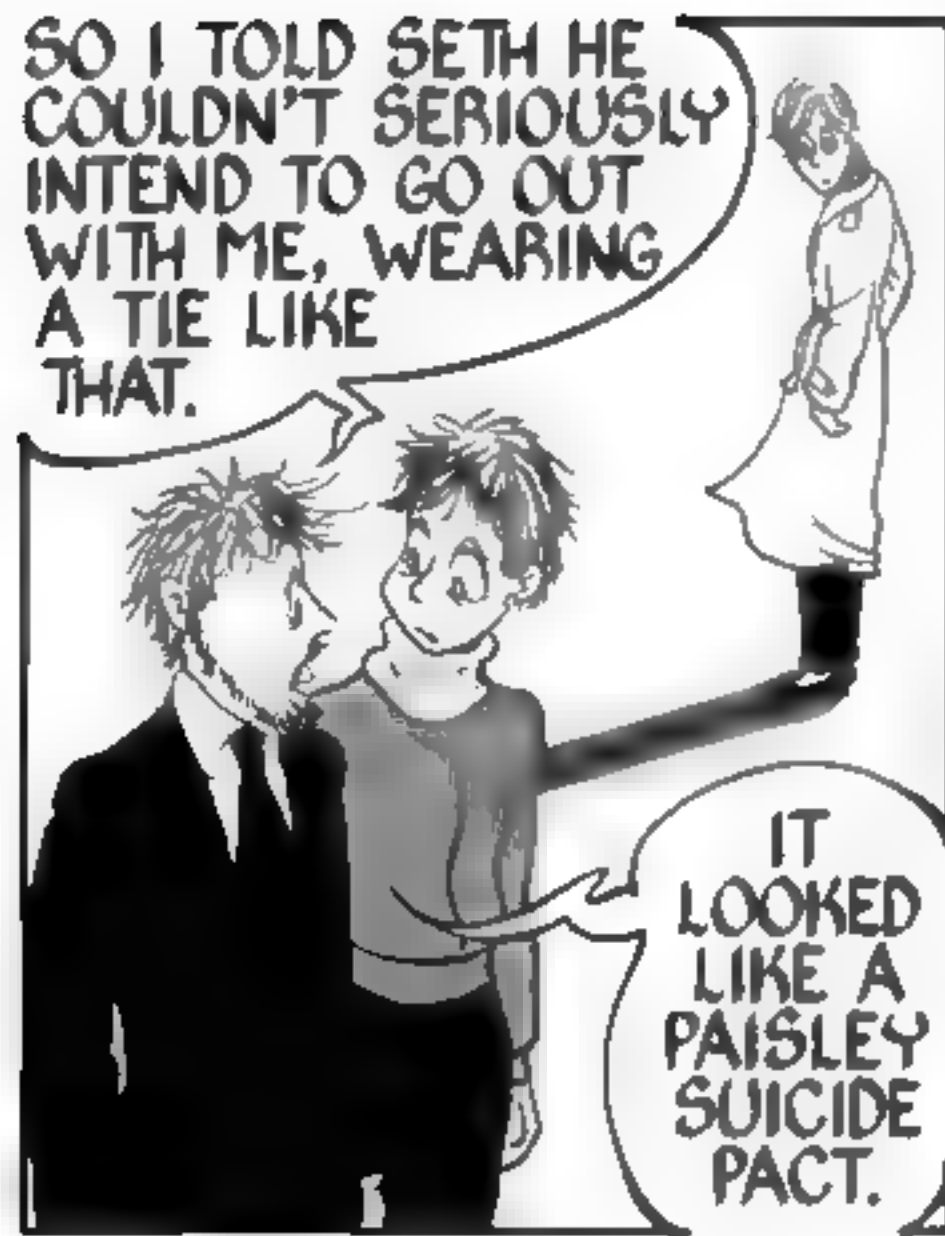
MONSTROUS,  
HORRIFIC,  
CRAZED DRAGON  
...ATTACKED  
SUDDENLY  
FROM AMBUSH...  
VIOLENTLY  
SUBDUED



Brooke

A HAIR

~





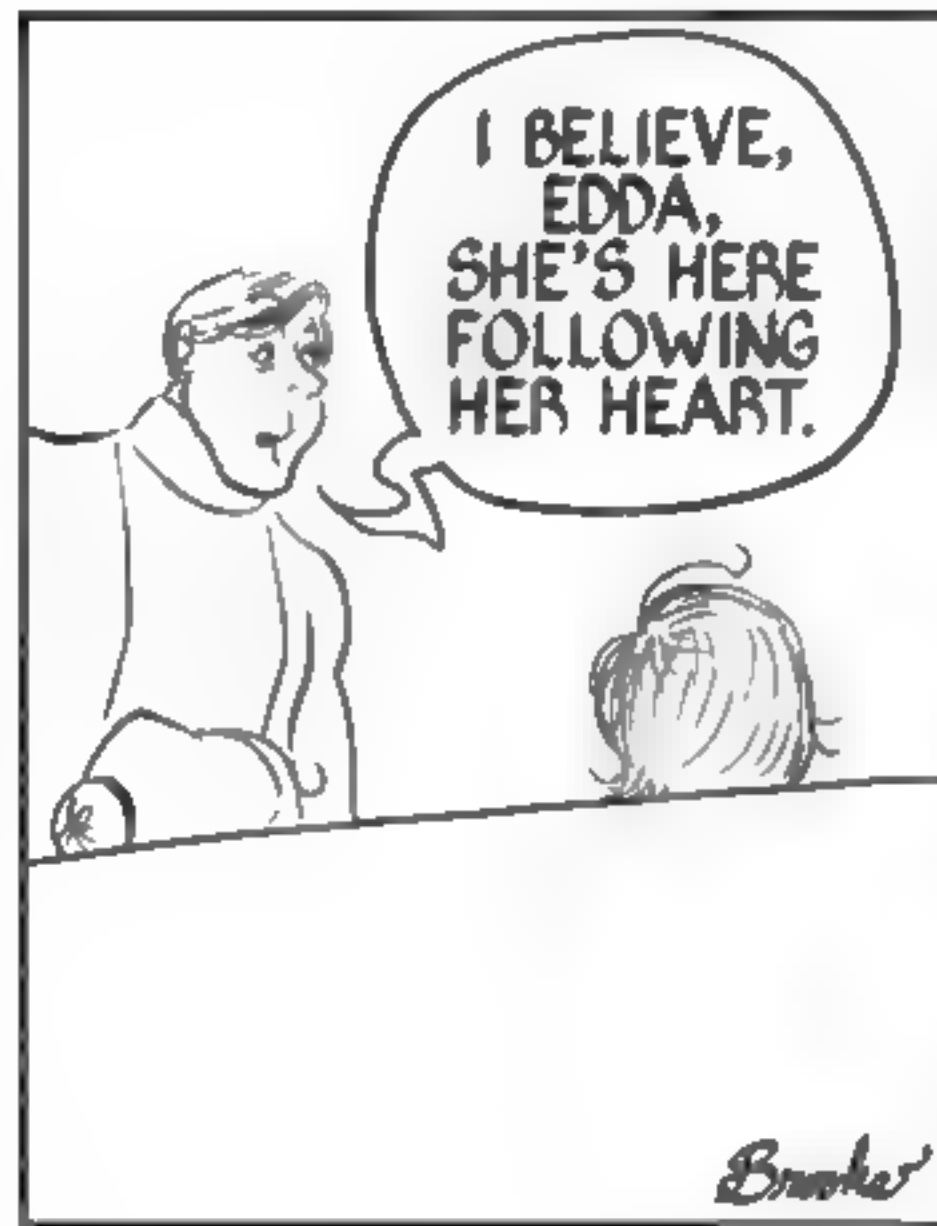
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*Brooke*







THE THING IS, I WAS A  
SISTER BECAUSE OF MY  
CONVICTION...AND FOR  
THE LONGEST  
TIME  
I CLUNG  
TO IT.



THEN ONE DAY I FOUND  
MYSELF VISITING WHO I  
WAS, AND I FOUND MY  
CONVICTION HAD BEEN  
SUPERCEDED BY A NEW  
ONE...ONE I SIMPLY  
COULDN'T  
SWEEP  
UNDER  
THE EDGE  
OF MY  
CON-  
SCIENCE.



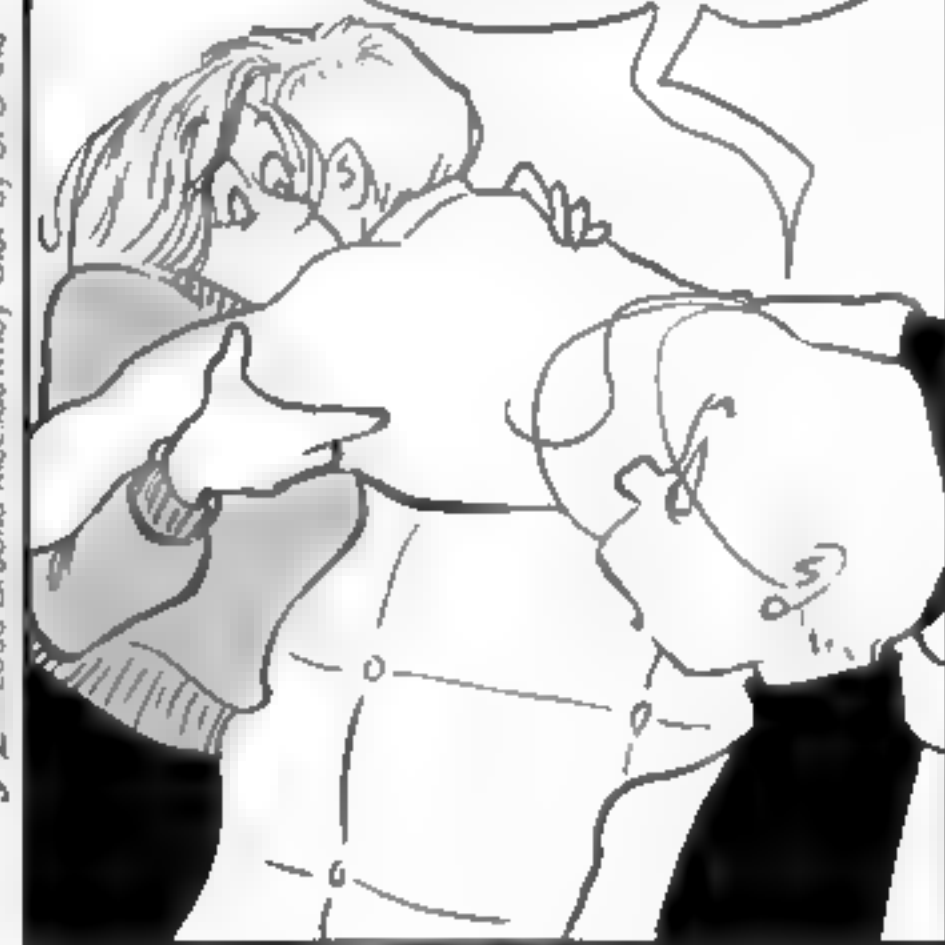
IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST  
DIFFICULT ACKNOWLEDG-  
MENTS I'VE EVER HAD  
TO MAKE.  
...BUT I DON'T  
SUPPOSE YOU  
KNOW WHAT  
I MEAN.



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*Brooke*

HE  
UNDERSTANDS.



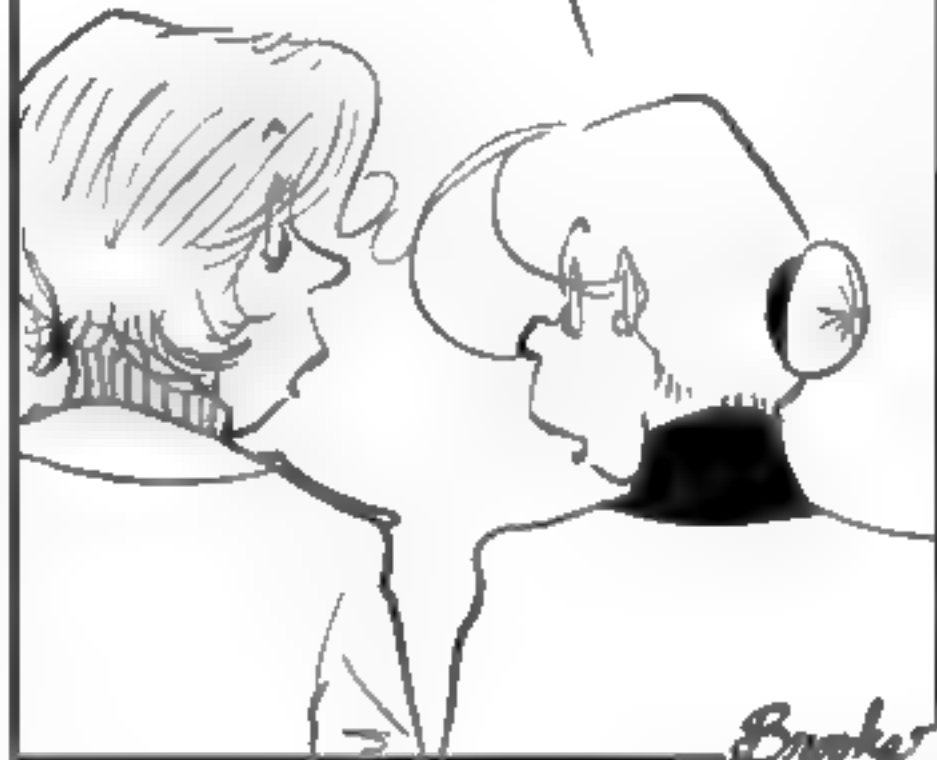
SO, WHAT'S  
IT LIKE BEING  
OUT OF THE  
SLAMMER?

I FIND  
THAT  
QUESTION  
APT, AND  
THEREFORE  
TASTELESS.



WHAT WAS  
IT LIKE  
FOR YOU?

GLORIOUS.  
YOU'LL GET  
ACCUSTOMED  
TO IT.



SISTER STEVEN,  
YOUR 10 O'CLOCK  
APPOINTMENT  
IS HERE.



FATHER DURLY,  
THANK YOU FOR  
DROPPING BY.



EXCUSE ME FOR  
INQUIRING,  
SISTER,  
BUT IS  
THERE A  
REASON  
YOU  
ASKED  
ME HERE...  
...I MEAN,  
OTHER  
THAN  
TO BURN  
HOLES  
IN MY  
FOREHEAD  
WITH YOUR  
EYES?

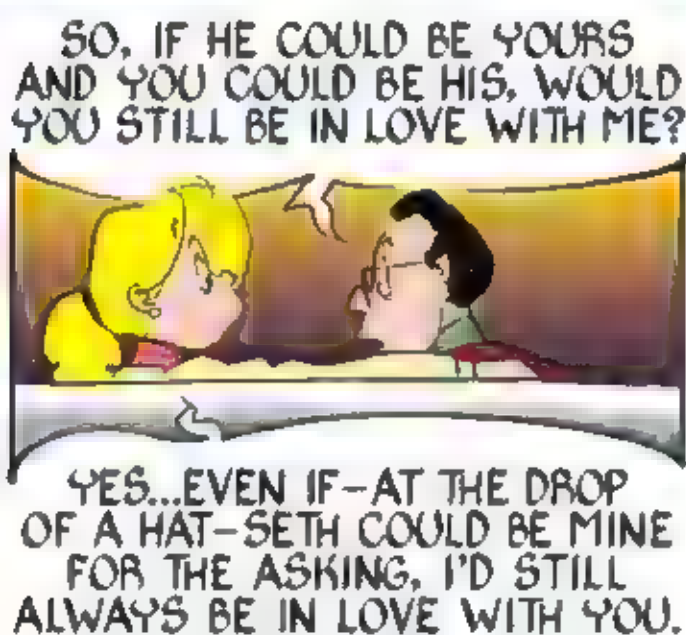
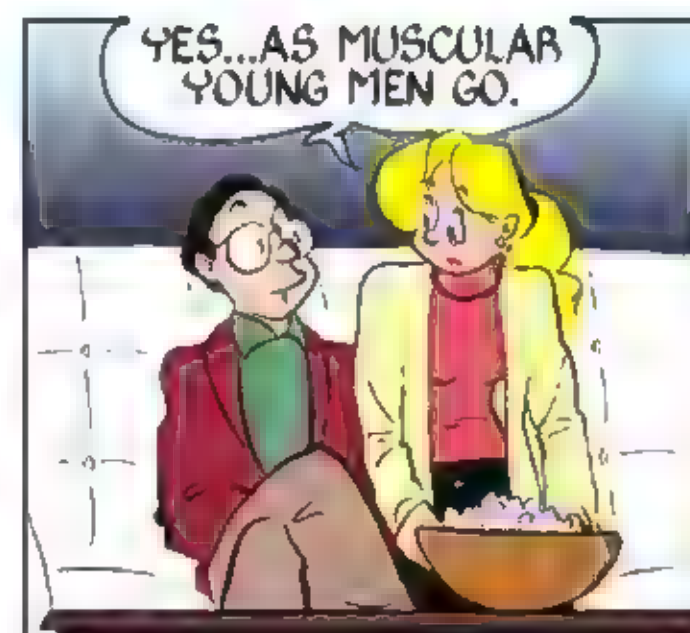
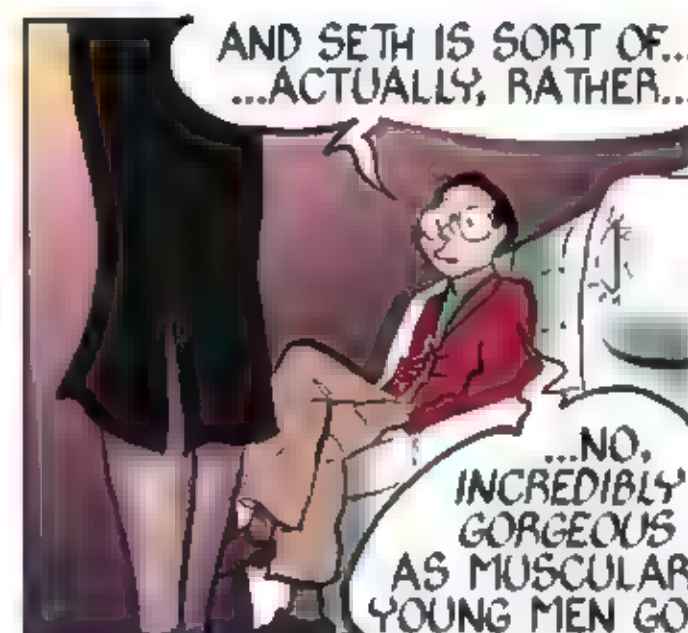
ONE OF MY SISTERS  
RESIGNED...  
...FROM THE  
SCHOOL AS  
WELL AS  
FROM HER  
ORDER.  
I THINK  
YOU KNOW  
WHO IT  
WAS,  
AND  
WHY.

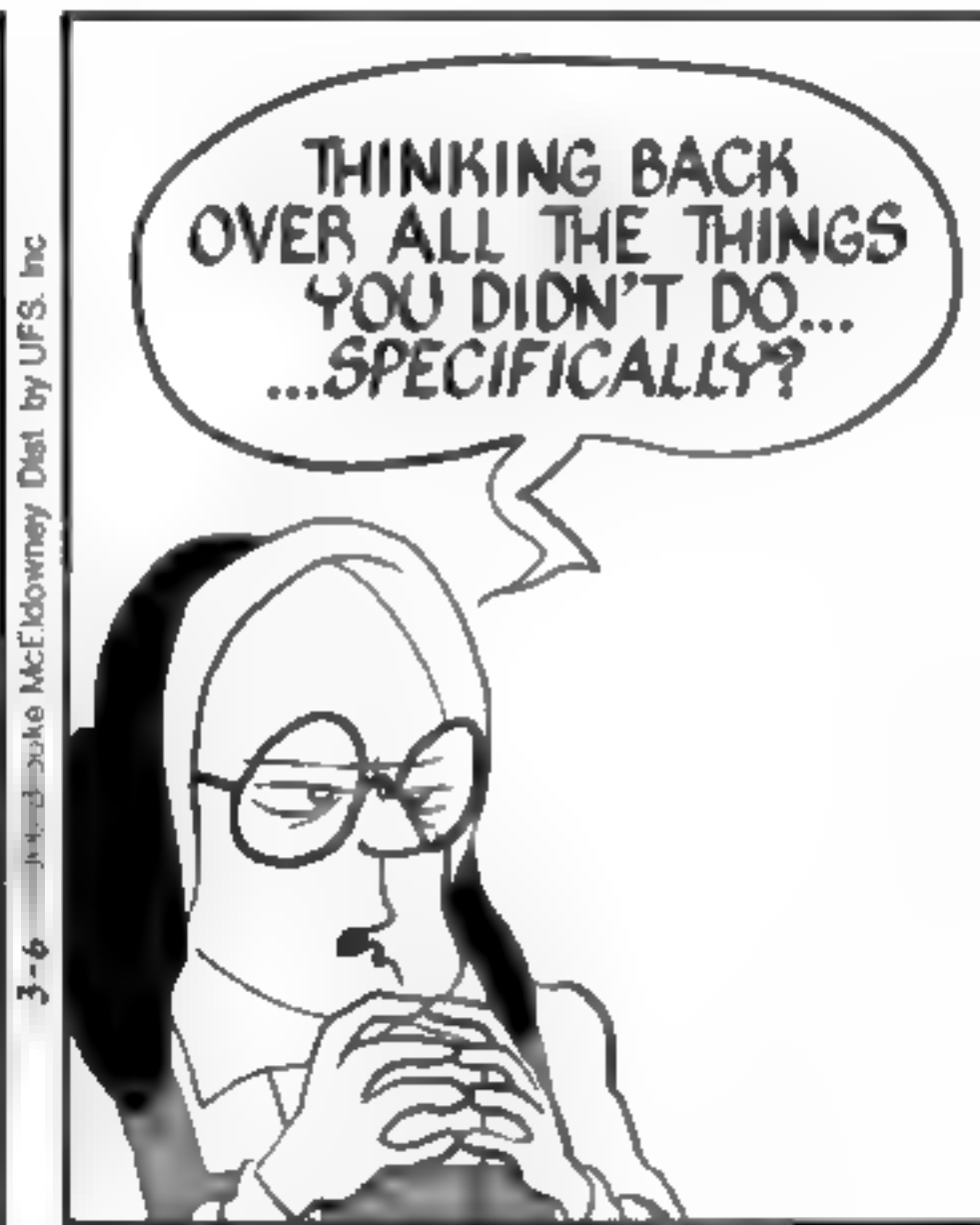
*Brooke*

I'M NOT  
SURE WHAT  
YOU'RE  
SUGGESTING,  
SISTER.

I'M NOT  
LOOKING FOR  
A CONFESSION...  
...I WANT YOU  
TO LEVEL  
WITH ME.









YOU KNOW, I DON'T  
LIKE WHAT YOU'RE  
IMPLYING ABOUT  
SISTER ARAMUS  
AND ME.



I'M IMPLYING NOTHING MORE  
THAN THAT YOU HAD AN  
INFLUENCE ON HER.  
WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE IS  
YOUR OWN INFERENCE...  
WHICH REVEALS MUCH  
MORE ABOUT YOUR  
CONSCIENCE THAN  
I THINK YOU  
WANT TO  
KNOW.

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THERE'S NOTHING ABOUT  
MY CONSCIENCE THAT  
I NEED NOT TO WANT  
TO KNOW...AND I'M  
NOT TELLING YOU  
WHAT IT IS.



WAIT A  
MINUTE.  
WHAT DID  
I SAY?

WHILE YOU  
WORK IT OUT,  
I HAVE  
SOME PAPERS  
TO GRADE.





WHAT I OBJECT TO ARE  
THE UNSUBSTANTIATED  
SUGGESTIONS YOU ARE  
ALLOWING TO FLOW  
FROM THIS OFFICE.



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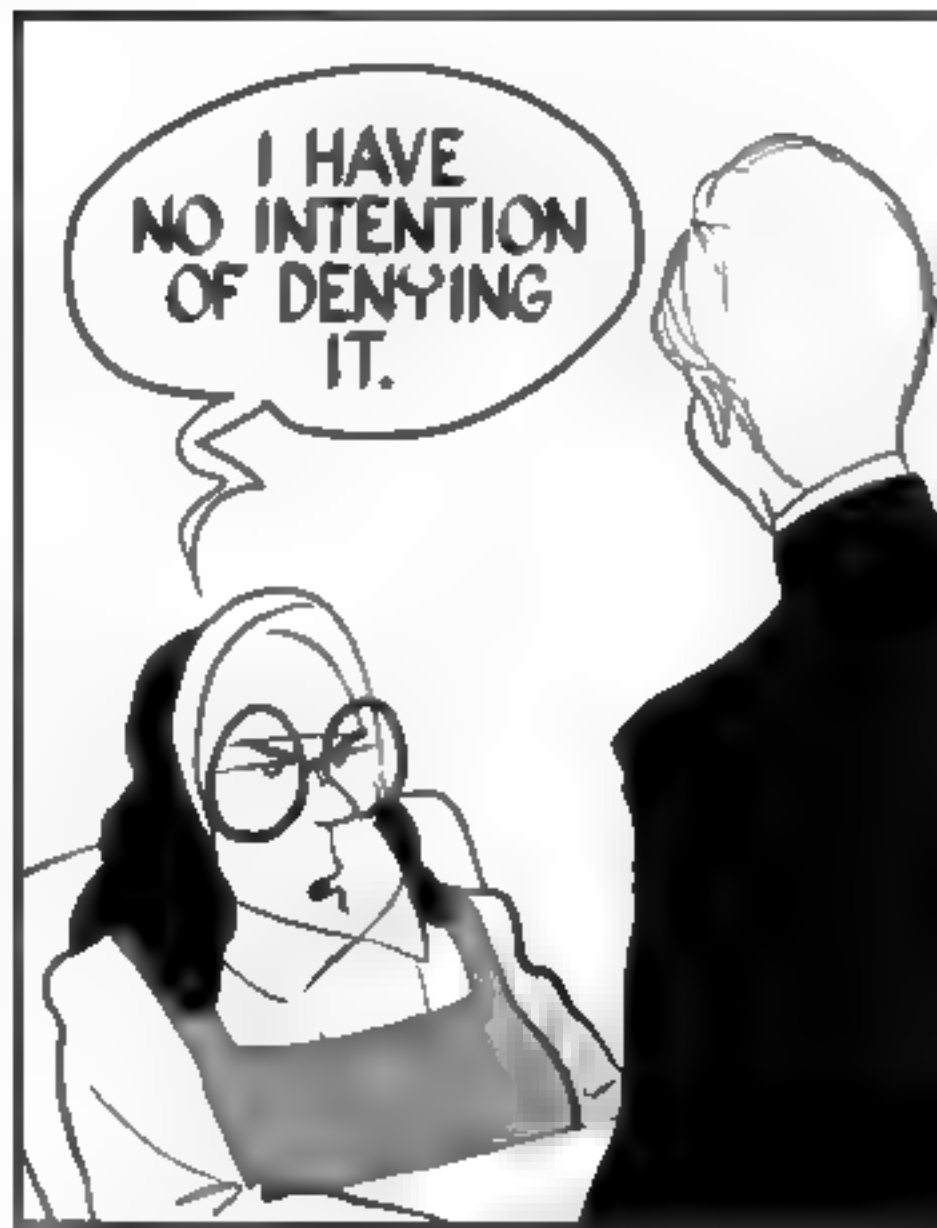
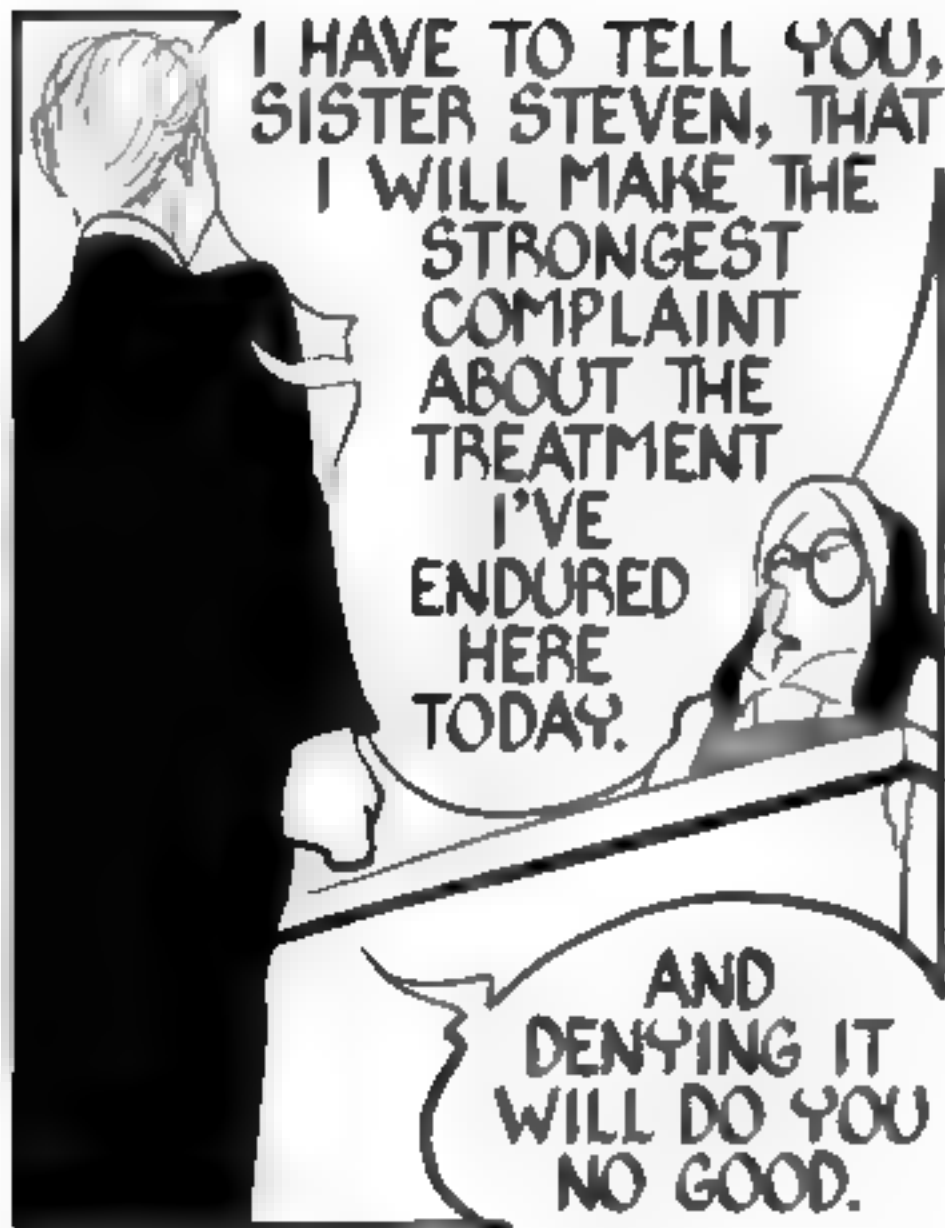
I ASSURE YOU,  
NO RUMORS LEAVE  
THIS SCHOOL.



CORRECT?



YES,  
SISTER.

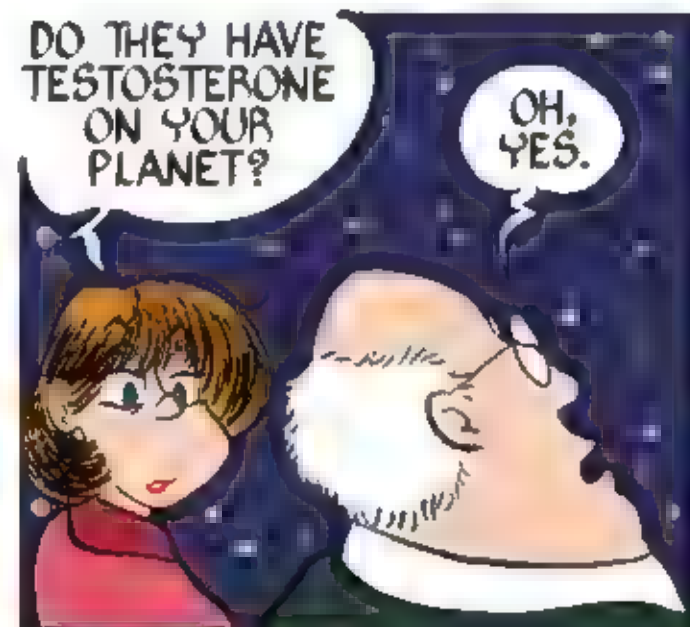
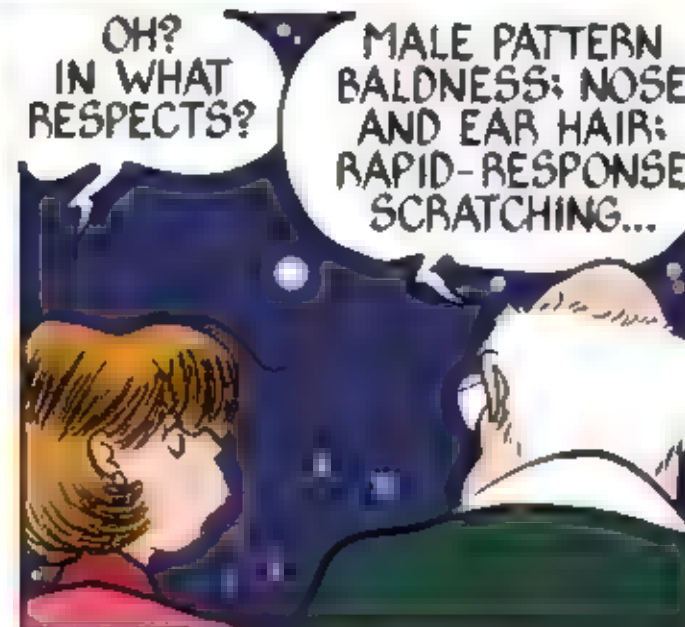
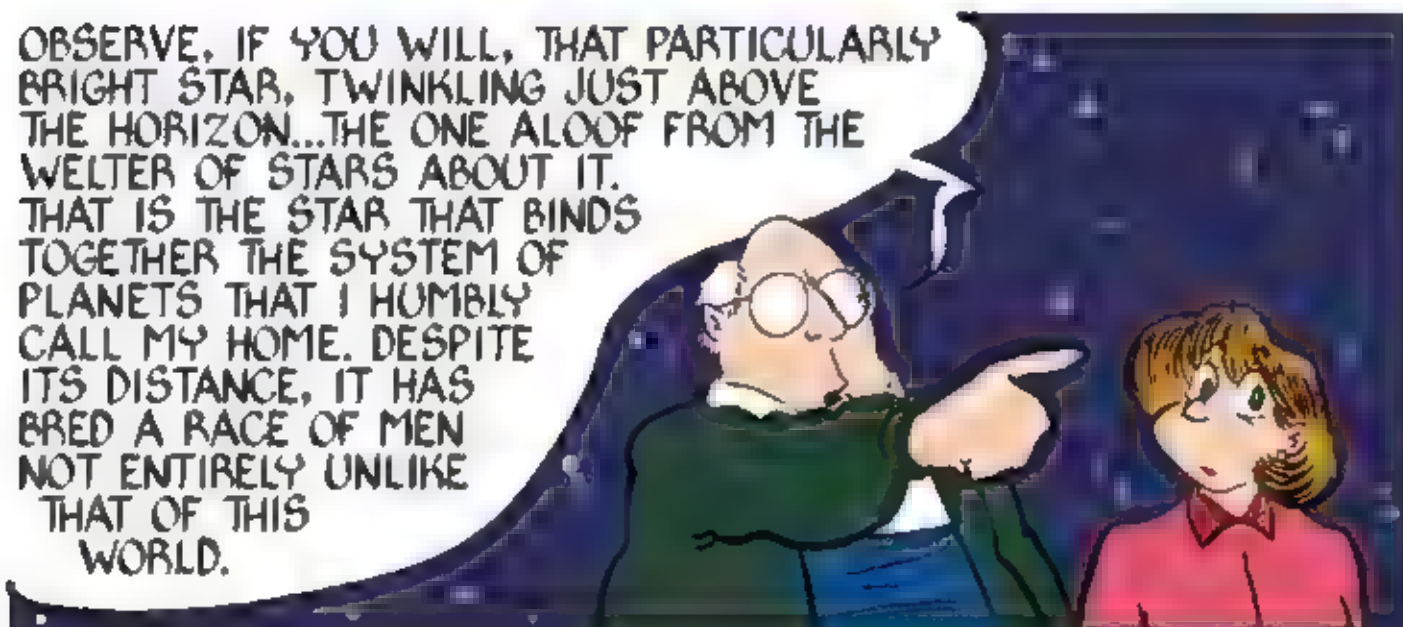
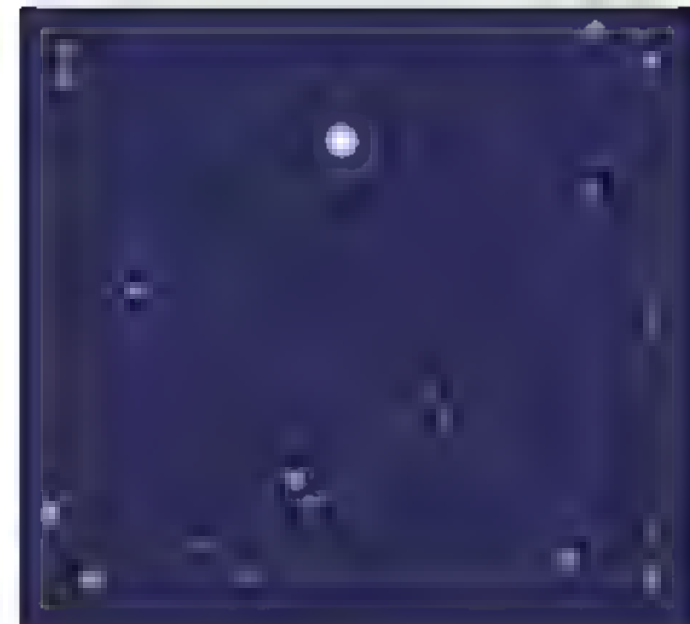


Brooke

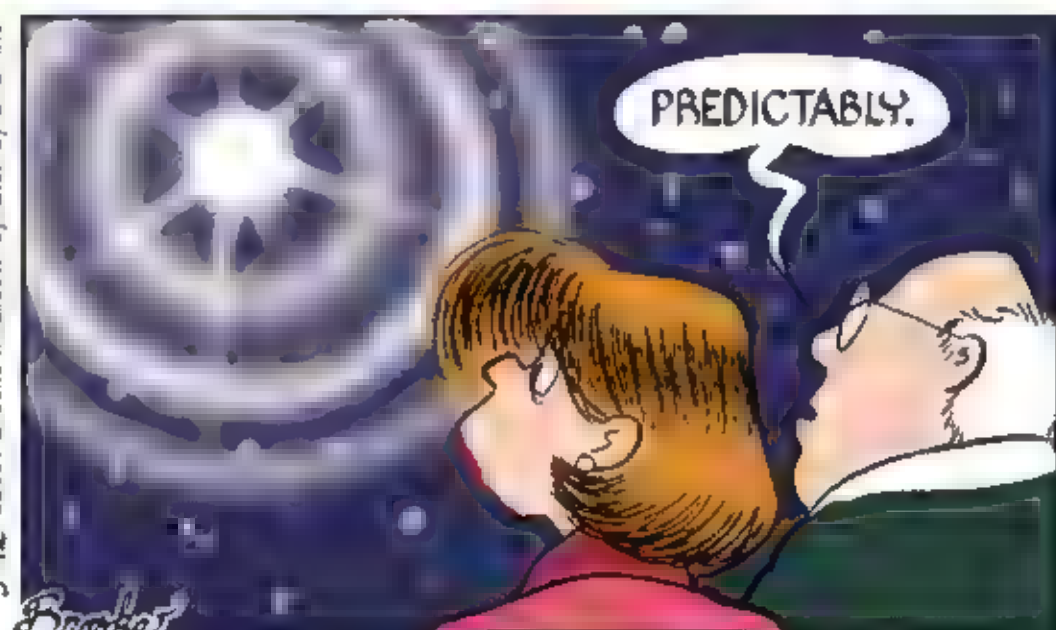


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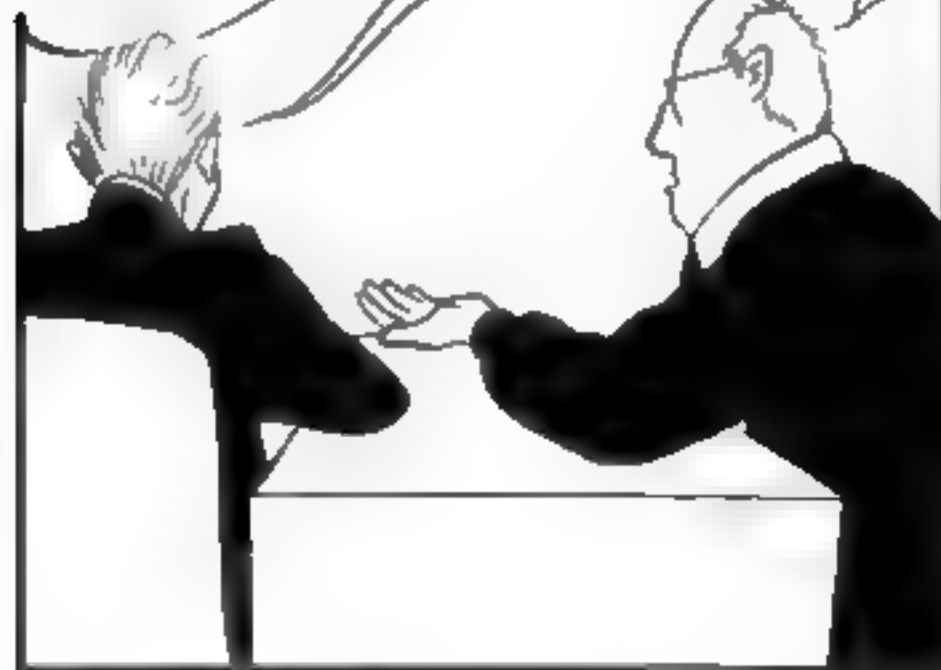
Brooker





I JUST NEED SOMEONE  
TO TALK TO...WHO WILL  
LISTEN WITH AN OPEN  
MIND, WITH AN  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE  
PENITENT  
SOUL.

GIVE ME  
YOUR  
HAND.



3 15

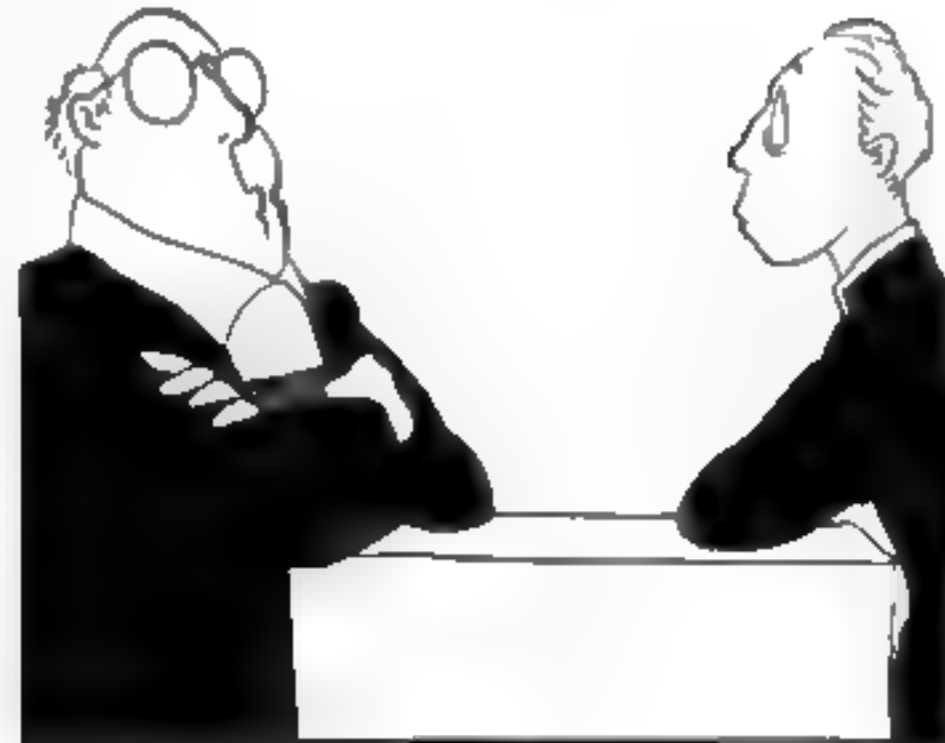
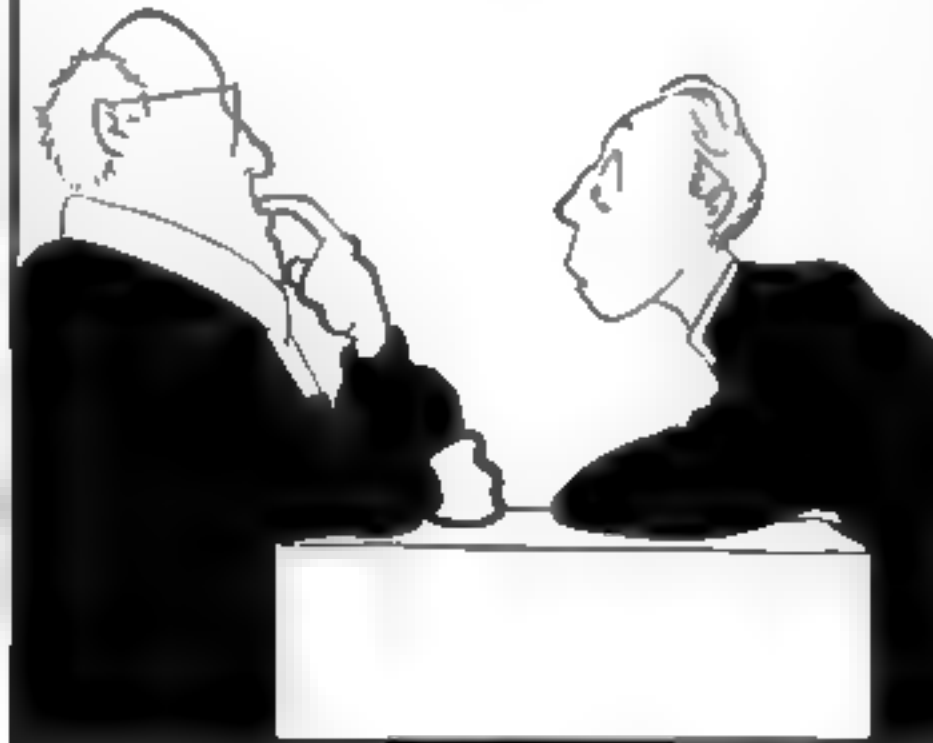


THE THING IS, I FELL  
IN LOVE. I NEVER ACTED  
ON IT. ALL I DID WAS  
TOUCH HER HAND. THEN  
WE PARTED AND NEVER  
SAW EACH OTHER  
AGAIN.

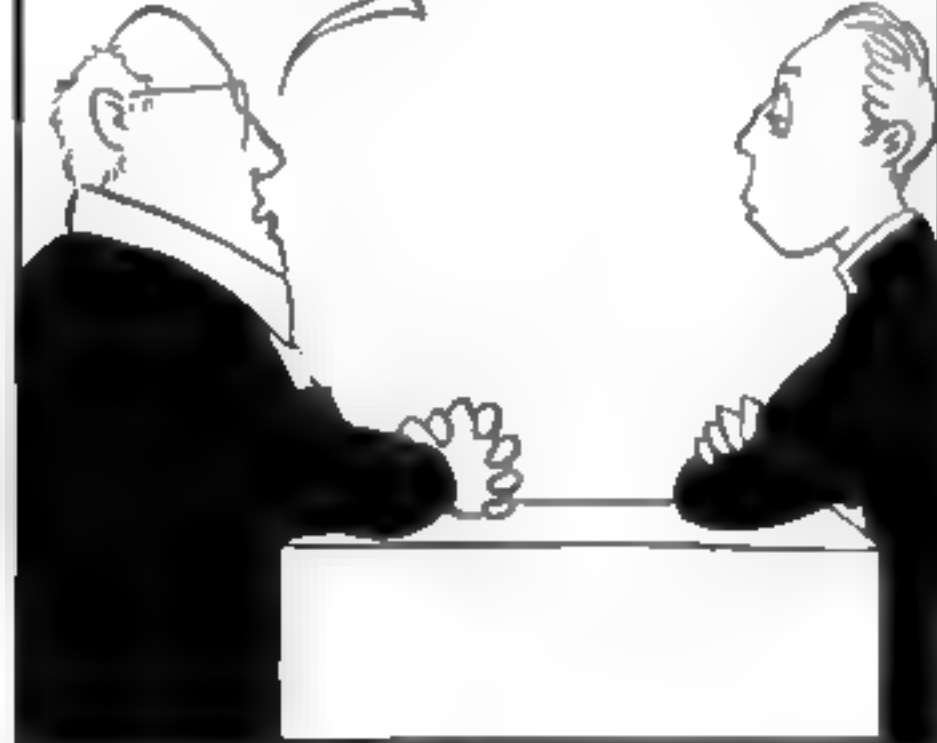


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*Brooke*



BORESVILLE.



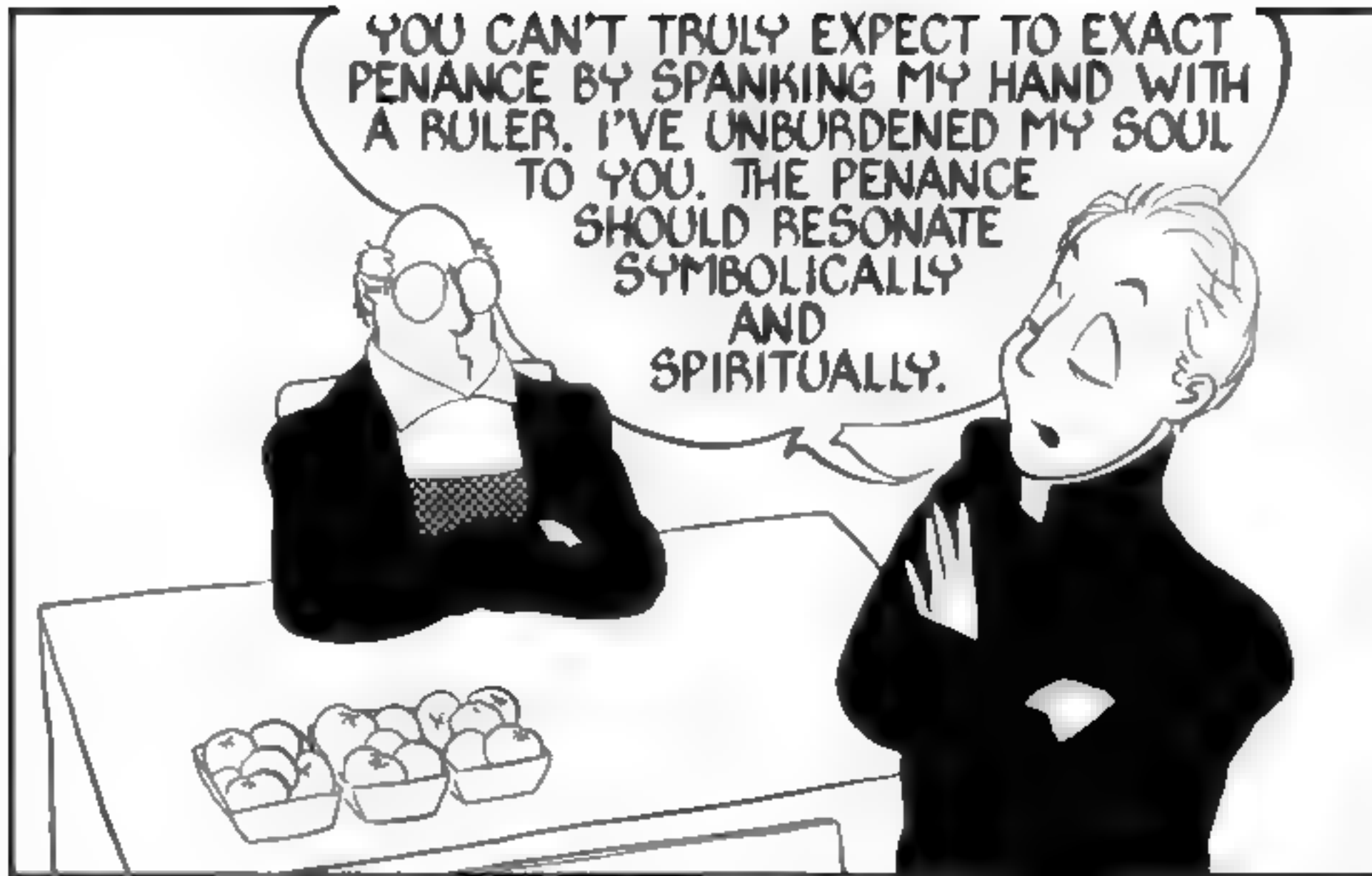


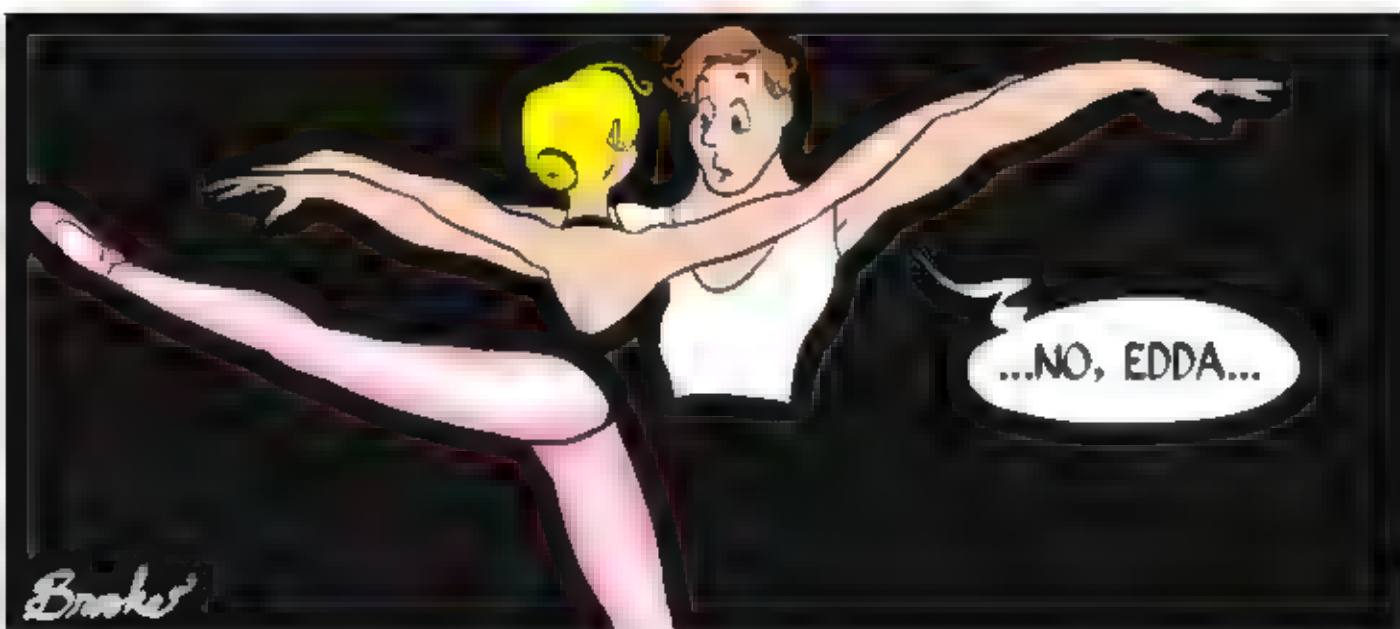
"BORESVILLE"!? I DON'T THINK  
I'VE EVER HEARD ANYONE  
RESPOND TO A CONFESSION  
WITH THE WORD  
"BORESVILLE"!

THAT HAS TO BE THE  
MOST UNCONSCIONABLE  
REACTION I'VE EVER  
WITNESSED! HAVE  
YOU NOTHING  
ELSE TO  
SAY!?

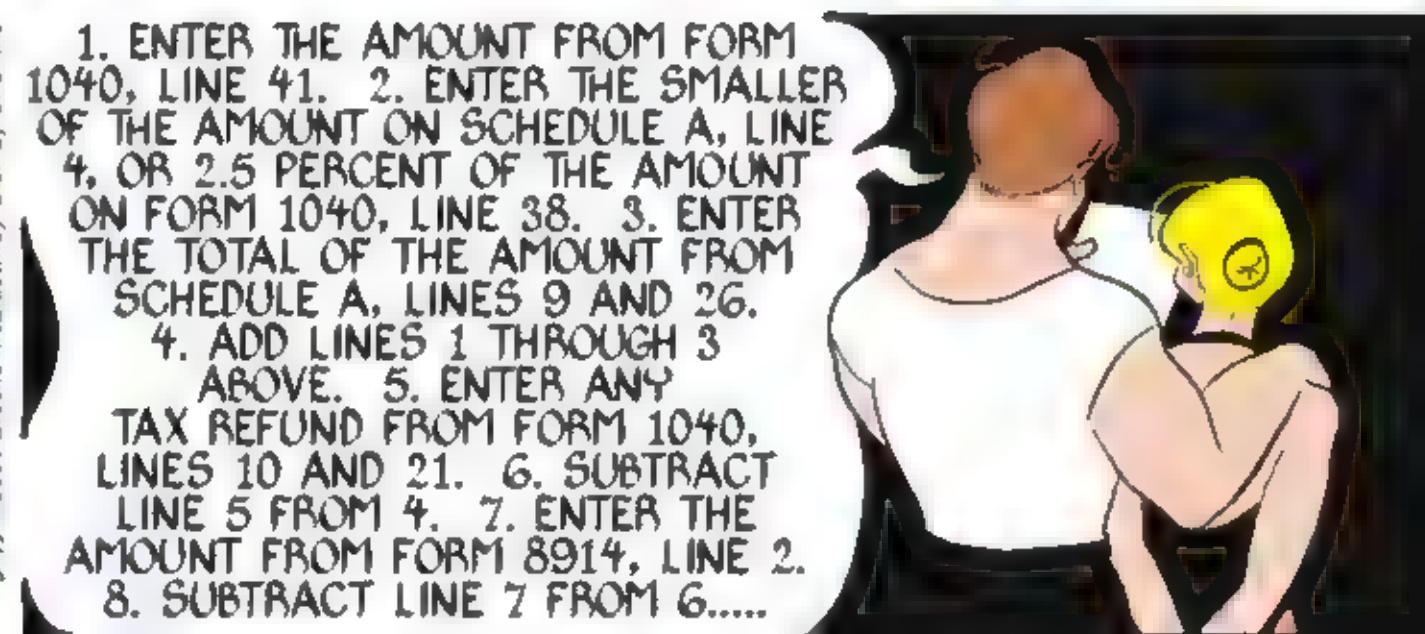
Brooke







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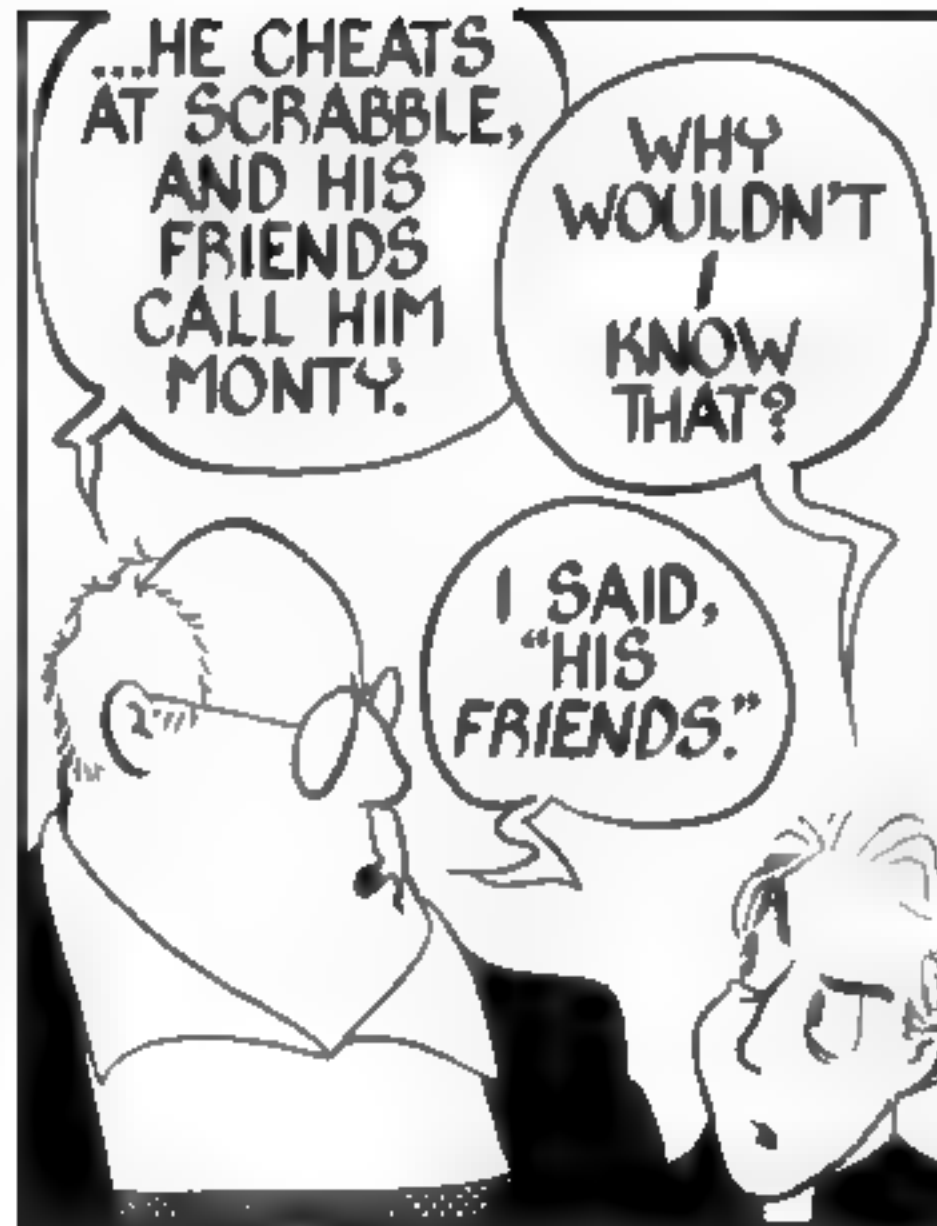
ONE THING YOU HAVE TO FACE IS THAT  
NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WAVE YOUR  
HANDS ABOUT, SPEAK IN STRANGE  
LOCUTIONS AND PONTIFICATE ON  
MATTERS OF WHICH YOU KNOW  
NOTHING, PEOPLE WILL TELL YOU  
THEY'RE NOT FOOLED  
INTO THINKING YOU'RE  
A MAN OF GOD!



DON'T LET IT GET  
YOU DOWN, FATHER DURLY.  
IT MAY SURPRISE YOU  
TO LEARN THAT PEOPLE  
HAVE SAID THE VERY  
SAME THING TO ME.









YOU'RE SAYING  
YOU TALK TO GOD?

I'M SAYING  
MONTY TALKS TO ME.  
HE TALKS TO US ALL.  
ACTUALLY, HE SPENDS  
A LOT OF TIME POURING  
OUT HIS HEART TO  
ALL OF CREATION.

*Brooke*



THE PROBLEM IS,  
NOBODY LISTENS.

JUST  
BETWEEN  
YOU AND ME,  
I THINK MONTY  
TENDS TO GET  
LONELY.

GOD, THE  
FATHER,  
MAKER OF  
HEAVEN  
AND EARTH,  
GETS LONELY!?

WOULDN'T  
YOU IF NO ONE  
EVER LISTENED  
TO YOU?



Brooke

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ALL HE EVER HEARS IS...  
...GIVE ME NICER HIPS,  
BLUER EYES, MORE MONEY,  
KILL HER, MAIM HIM, SMITE  
THIS, PLAGUE THAT...HE  
CAN'T GET A WORD IN  
EDGEWISE.

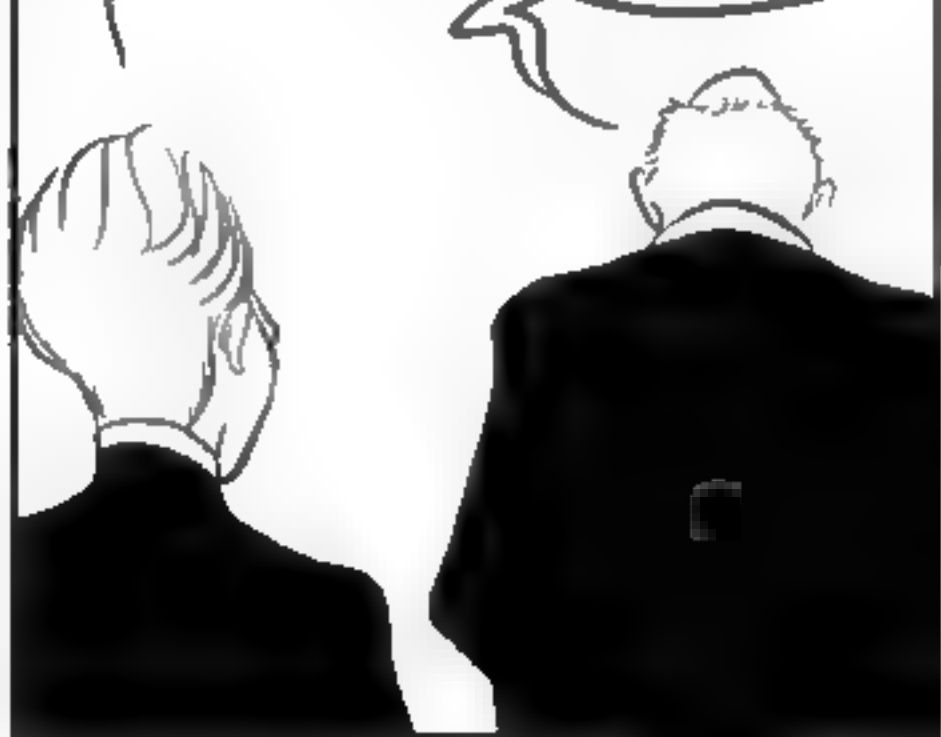


THERE'S NOTHING MONTY  
WOULD LIKE BETTER THAN  
TO SIT DOWN FOR A LITTLE  
BANTER OVER DINNER.  
BUT INSTEAD HE'S TREATED  
LIKE A WAITER...HE TAKES  
ORDERS...LISTENS  
TO COMPLAINTS  
ABOUT THE  
FOOD...



BUT  
YOU  
LISTEN.

YOU SHOULD  
HEAR HIS  
STORY ABOUT  
THE TIME HE  
MET KATHARINE  
HEPBURN.



SO,  
WHATEVER  
HAPPENED  
WITH YOU  
AND FATHER  
DURLY?

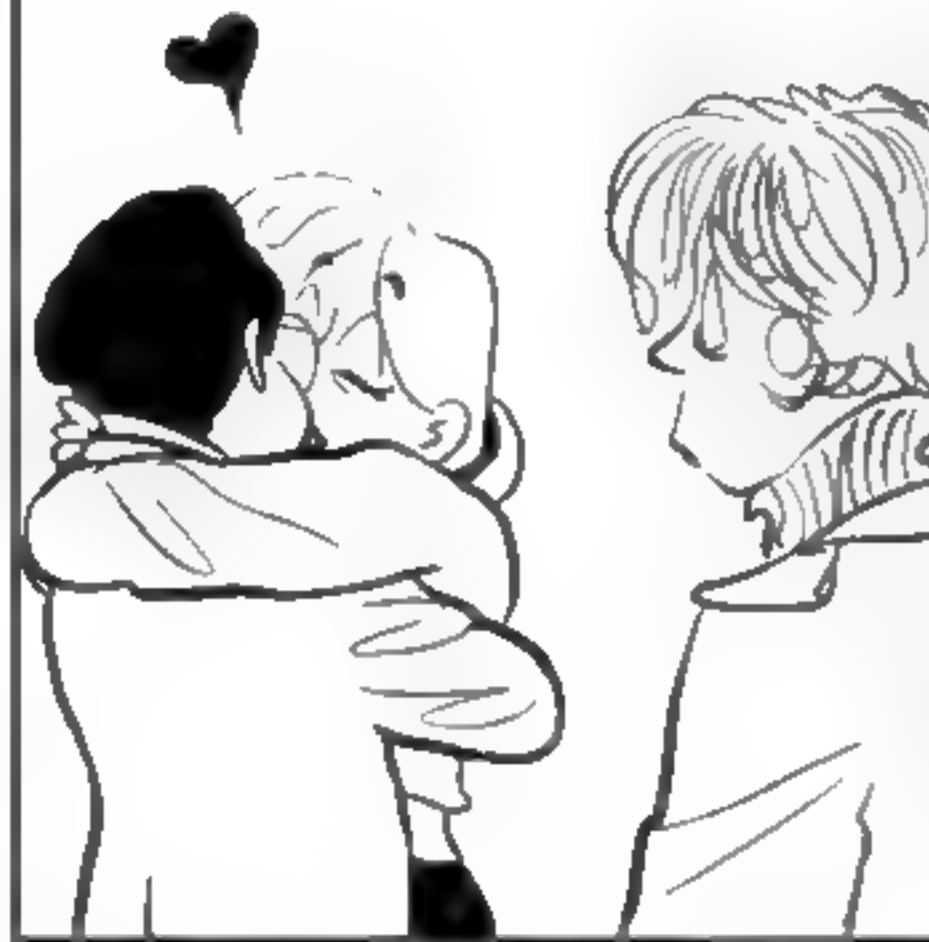
NOTHING.  
WE BECAME  
FRIENDS, THEN  
WE PARTED.  
I COULDN'T  
FORGET  
HIM,  
BUT I  
COULDN'T  
RUIN  
HIS LIFE  
EITHER.



YOU KNOW WHAT  
MIGHT HAPPEN IF  
I TOLD HIM HOW  
I FELT?



*Brooke*

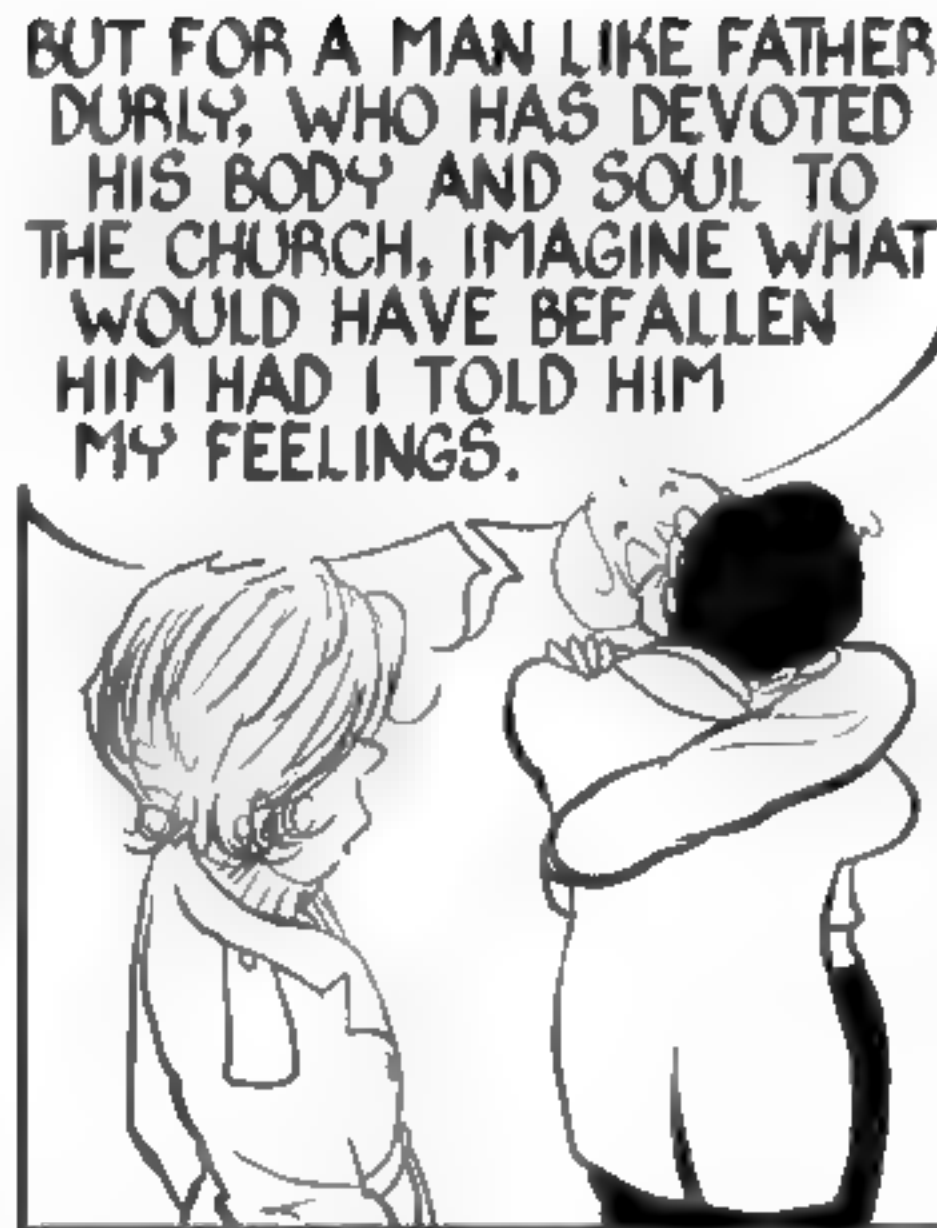


SOMETHING  
LIKE THAT?

SOMETHING  
LIKE THAT.







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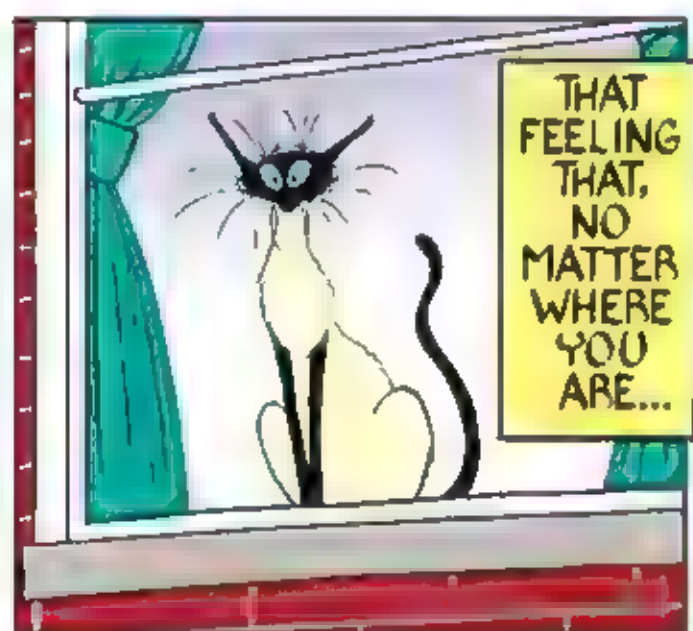


9  
CHICKWEED  
LANE

®



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BEFORE I GO, I JUST WANT  
TO ASK YOU ONE THING:  
HAS IT OCCURRED  
TO YOU THAT  
PEOPLE WHO  
TALK TO GOD  
MIGHT SIMPLY  
BE INSANE?

OH,  
INDEED.



*Brooke*



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HAS IT  
OCCURRED  
TO YOU  
WITHOUT  
STARING  
AT ME?



SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING  
IS, YOU MET A FARMER IN  
NEW HAMPSHIRE WHO TOLD  
YOU A FEW THINGS YOU  
WANTED TO KNOW  
ABOUT GOD?

NOT  
AT  
ALL.

HE TOLD ME A GREAT  
DEAL I DIDN'T WANT  
TO KNOW ABOUT GOD.

WHY  
DID YOU  
LISTEN,  
THEN?

I DON'T KNOW, YOUR  
EXCELLENCY...I GUESS,  
BECAUSE THERE WAS SO  
MUCH I NEEDED TO SAY.

ABOUT  
WHAT?

ARE YOUR  
EARS  
BURNING?  
THEY'RE  
PINK.

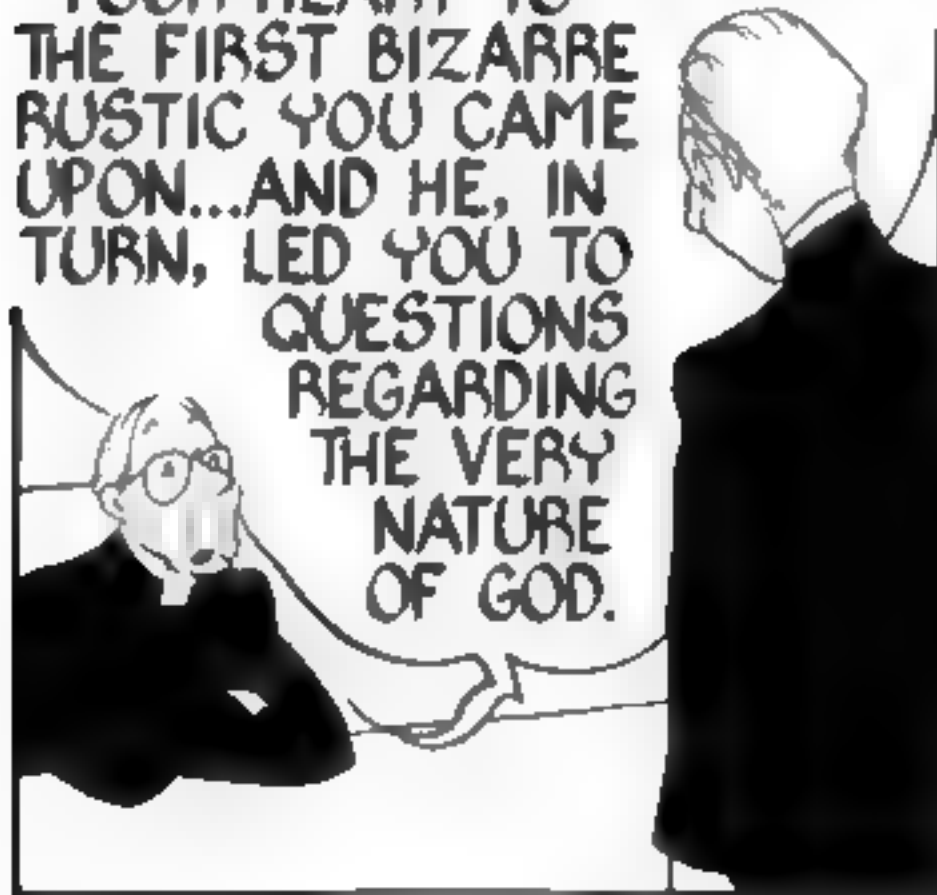
NO...  
...BUT THEY'RE  
KIND OF WARM.

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*Brooks*



TO SUM UP, YOU HAD  
SOMETHING WEIGHING ON  
YOUR MIND...SO MUCH SO  
THAT YOU POURED OUT  
YOUR HEART TO  
THE FIRST BIZARRE  
RUSTIC YOU CAME  
UPON...AND HE, IN  
TURN, LED YOU TO  
QUESTIONS  
REGARDING  
THE VERY  
NATURE  
OF GOD.



IN A NUTSHELL,  
YES.



AND YET,  
FURTHER TO THAT,  
YOU HAVE NOTHING  
TO TELL ME?



ARE YOU WITHHOLDING  
INFORMATION,  
FATHER DURLY?

YES,  
I AM.



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I AM VERY  
GRATEFUL.  
THANK YOU.



Brooks

IT'S NOT AS IF I NEVER  
LIVED IN A SECULAR  
WORLD. THE TRICK  
IS BECOMING  
RE-ACCLI-  
MATED.

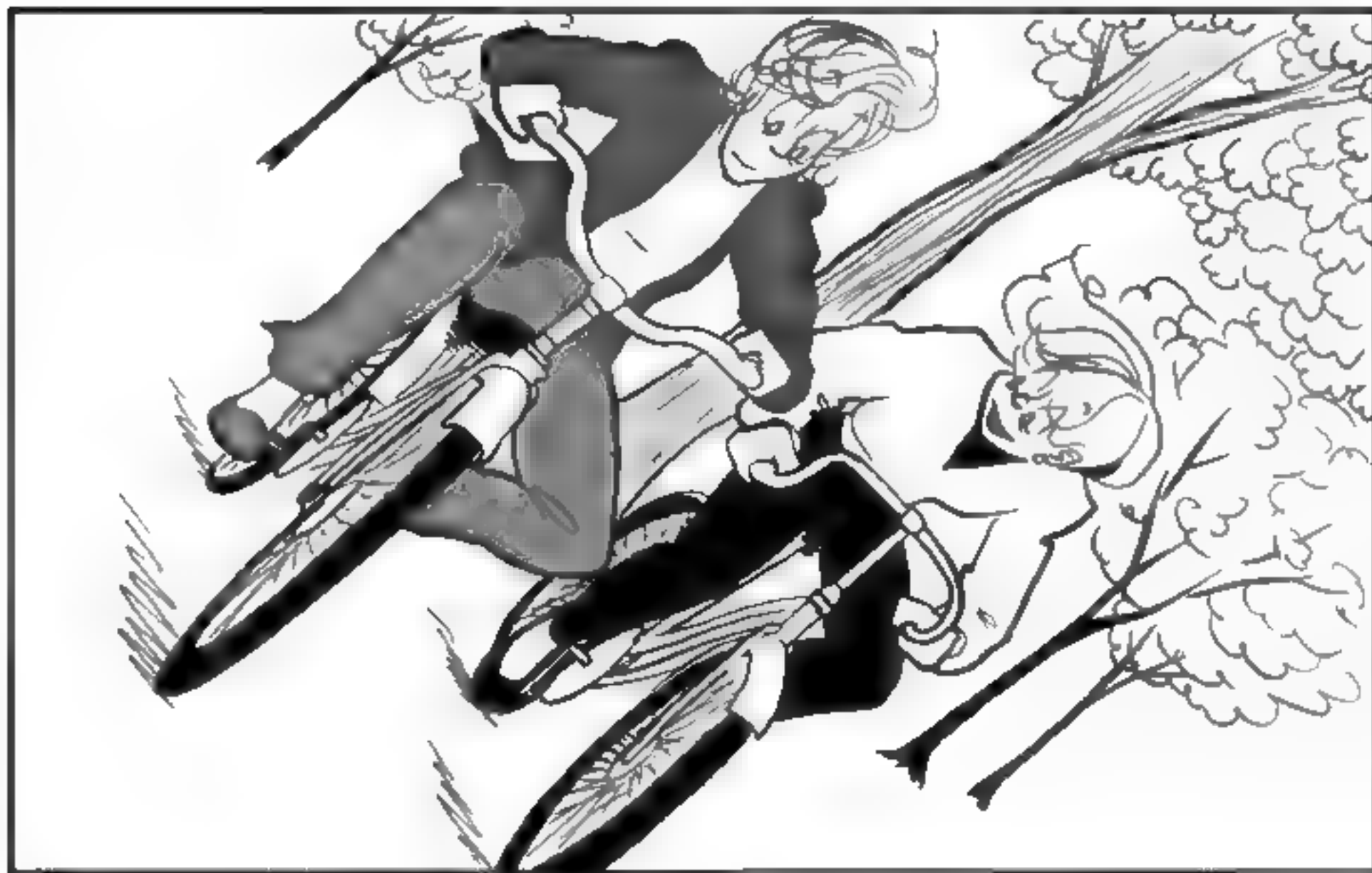
WELL,  
IT MUST BE  
LIKE RIDING  
A BICYCLE.  
YOU  
NEVER  
FORGET  
HOW.

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ACTUALLY, BIKE-RIDING  
IS SOMETHING I NEVER  
LEARNED. YOU'LL HAVE  
TO USE ANOTHER SIMILE.

NOTHING  
DOING.

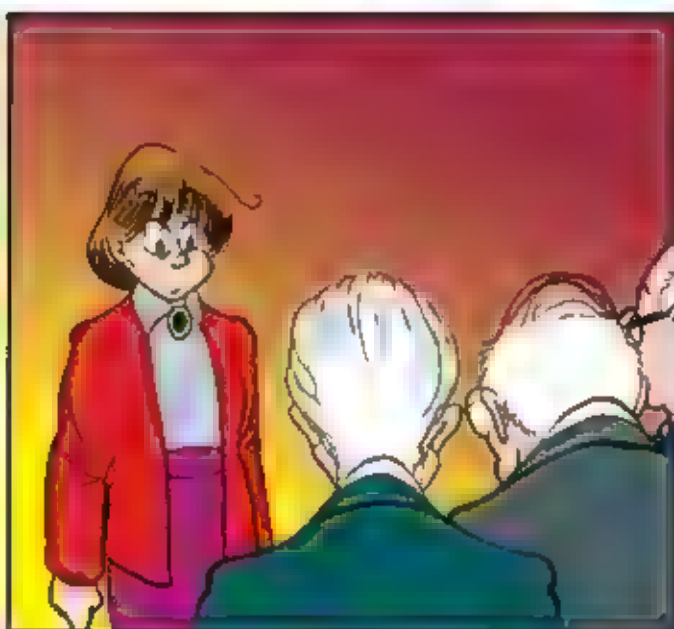
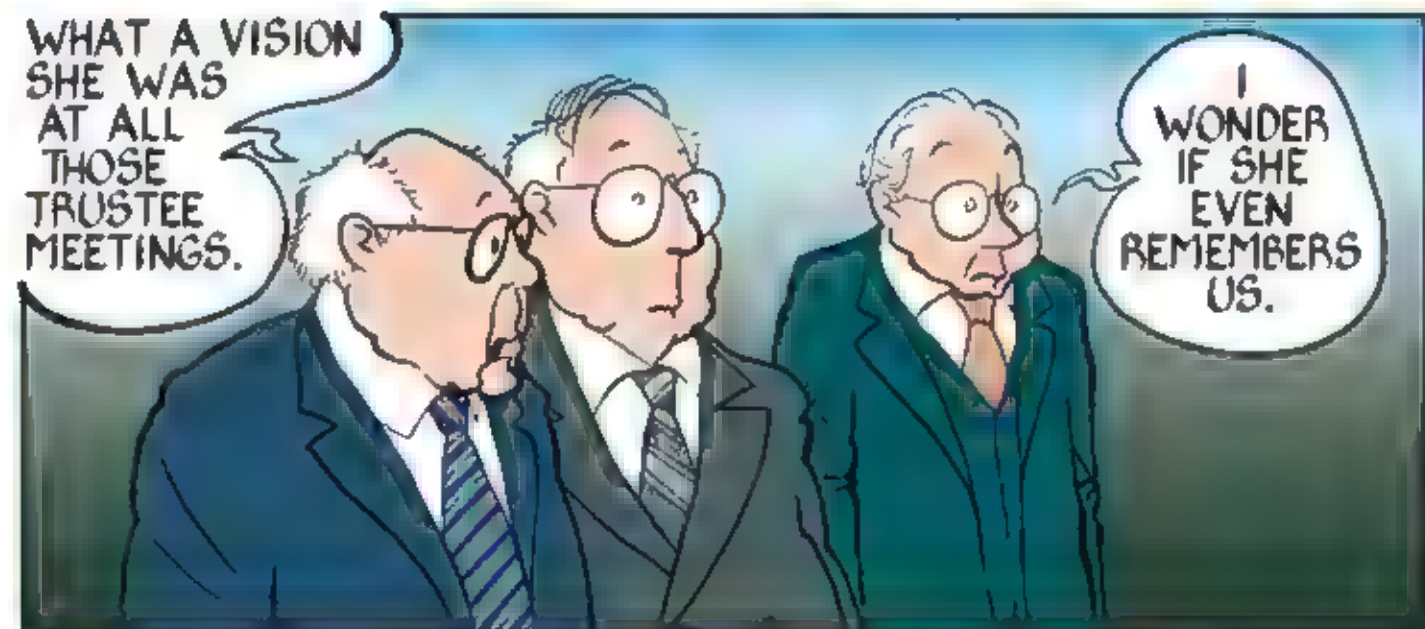
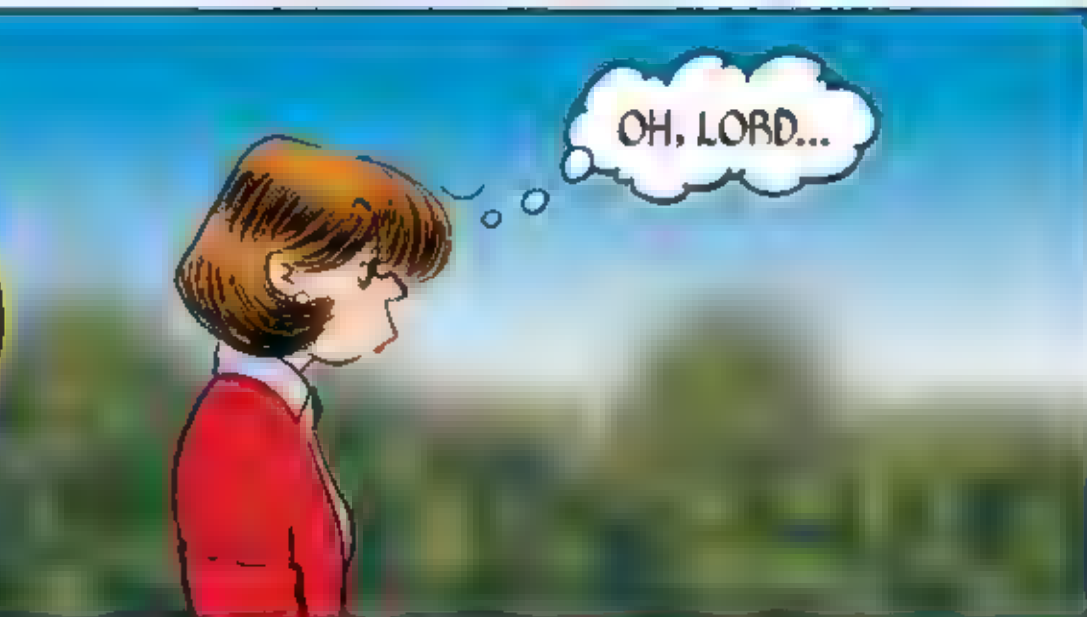
Brooke





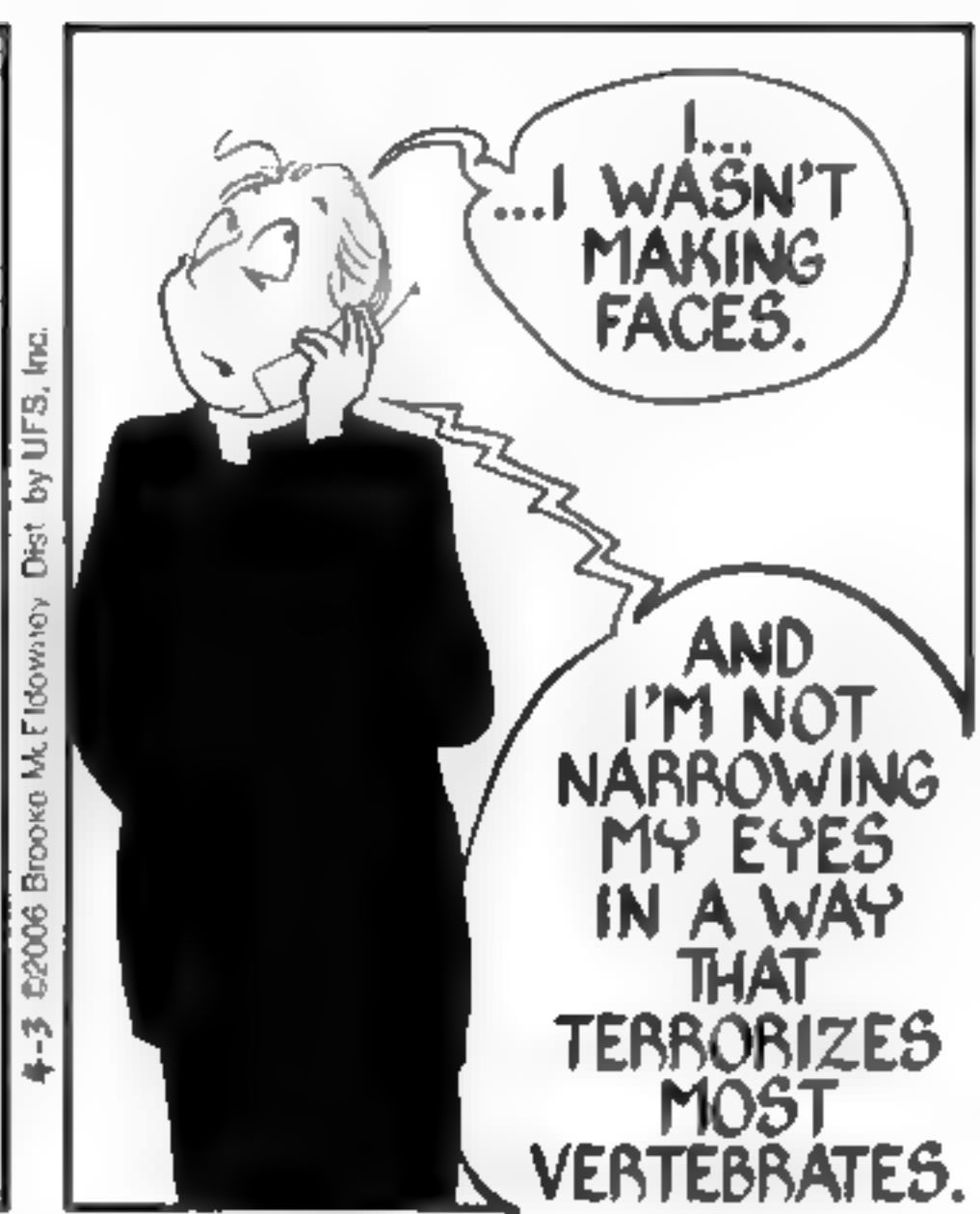






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WHAT DO YOU WANT OF  
ME, SISTER CALIGULA?

I WANT  
YOU  
TO FIND A  
FORMER  
STUDENT  
OF THIS  
SCHOOL.

*Brooke*

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HER NAME IS EDDA BURBER.  
SHE WAS CLOSE TO SISTER  
ARAMUS, AND MAY KNOW  
WHERE SHE IS.



HER TELEPHONE NUMBER IS  
UNLISTED, AND THE BALLET  
COMPANY WHERE SHE  
WORKS WOULDN'T  
DISCLOSE IT TO  
ME OVER THE  
PHONE.



AND DON'T CALL ME  
SISTER CALIGULA.



I'M QUITE ASTONISHED  
THAT YOU SHOULD CALL ME  
"SISTER CALIGULA," FATHER  
DURLY. I EXPECT THAT SORT  
OF THING FROM STUDENTS,  
NOT FROM A MEMBER OF  
THE CLERGY. I AM APPALLED  
AND MORTIFIED AT YOUR  
SHOCKING  
LACK OF.....



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4-5

...I...I, UH....HONESTLY,  
SISTER...I'M SURE I DIDN'T...  
...I MEAN...SISTER STEVEN,  
PLEASE.....YOU...I...THIS IS  
ALL AN UNFORTUNATE  
MISUNDER-....  
...HELLO?...  
...HELLO?



Brooke



EVERY ONCE  
IN A WHILE,  
I REALLY COULD DO  
WITH A CIGARETTE.

RATTLING  
A CAGE,  
SISTER?



I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET  
HOLD OF EDDA BURBER,  
BUT NO ONE IN THE  
BALLET COMPANY  
CAN SEEM TO  
HELP ME.

SHE'S GONE FOR THE  
EVENING, FATHER, AND  
WE'RE NOT ALLOWED  
TO GIVE OUT TELEPHONE  
NUMBERS.

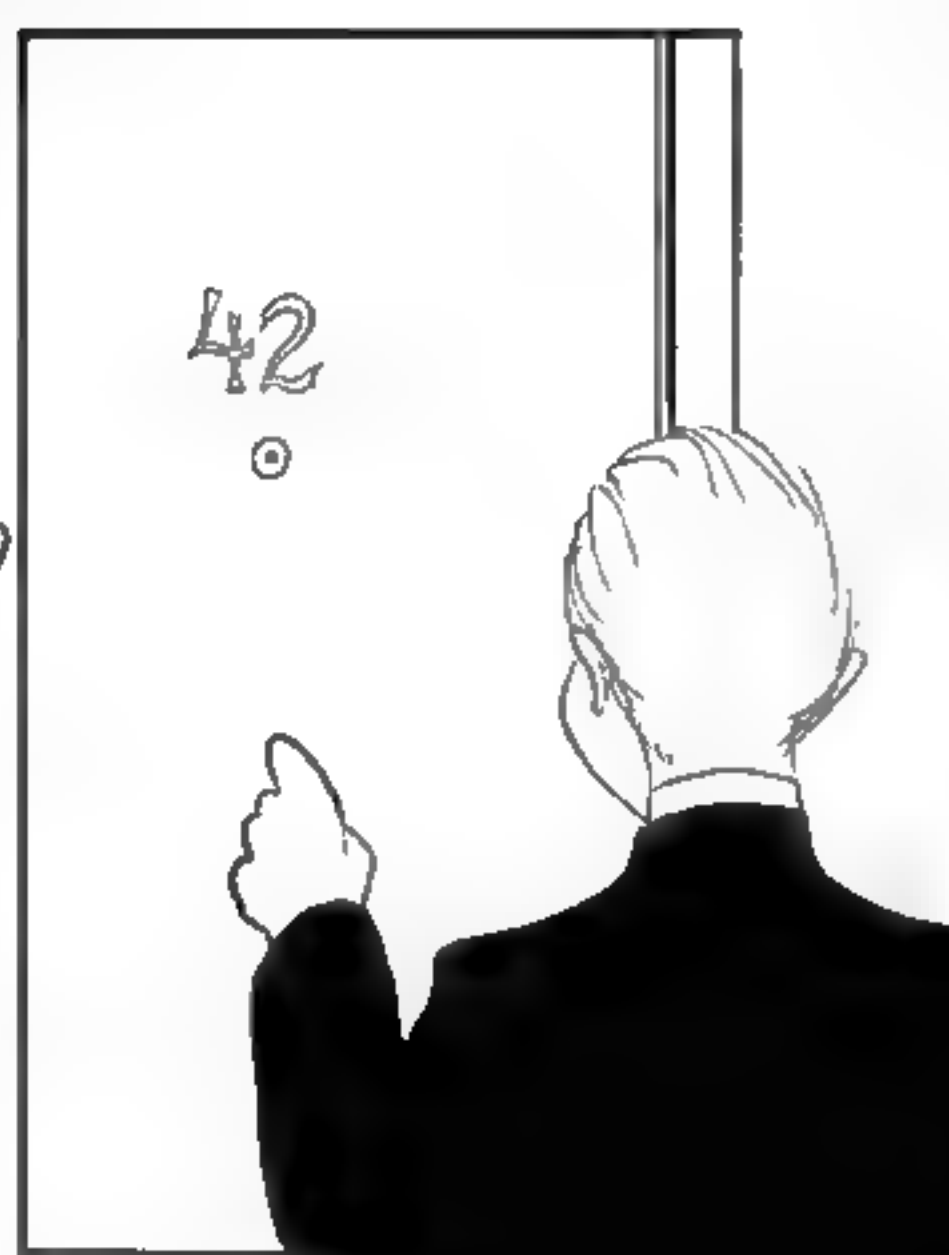
I SEE.

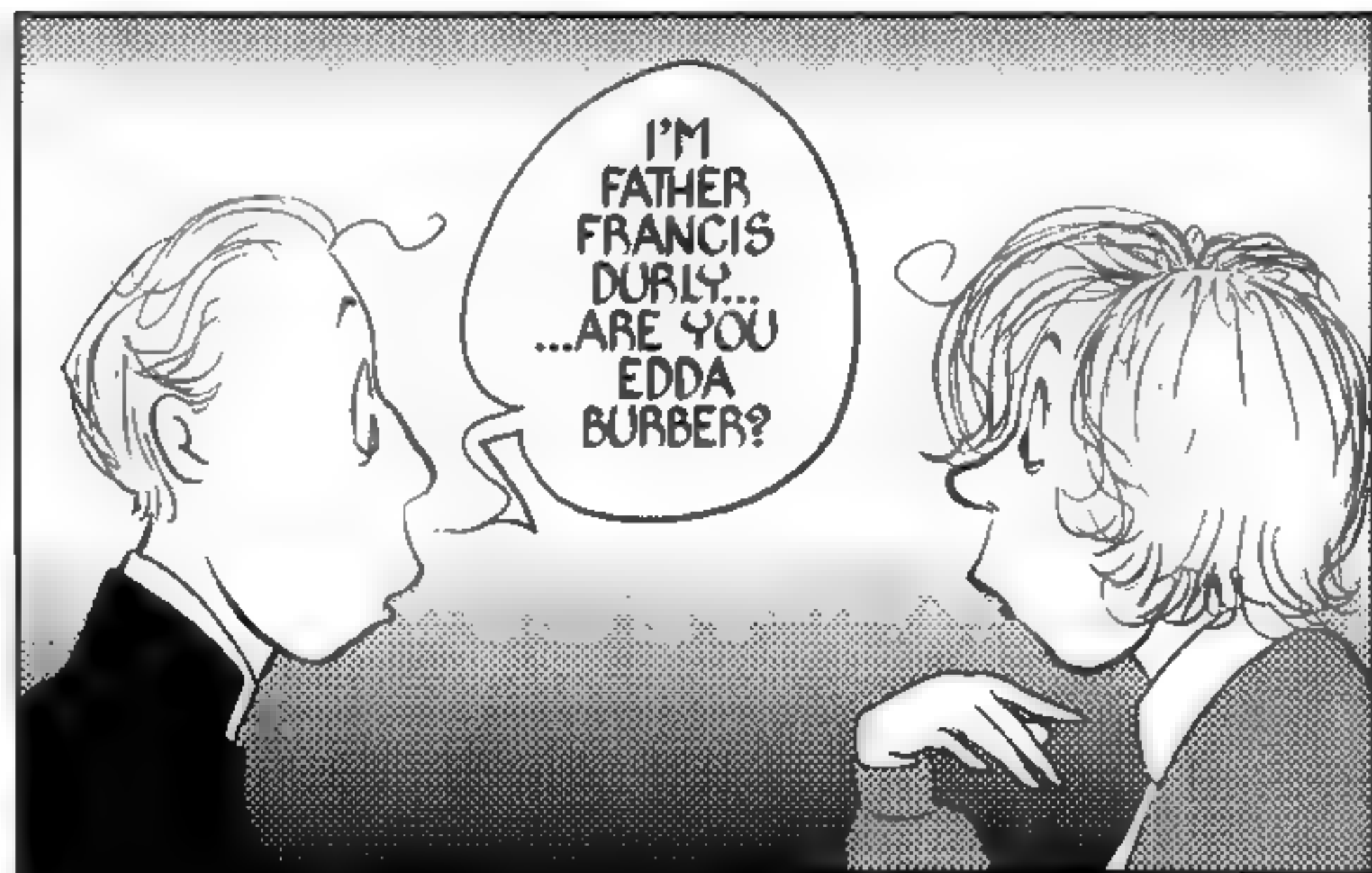
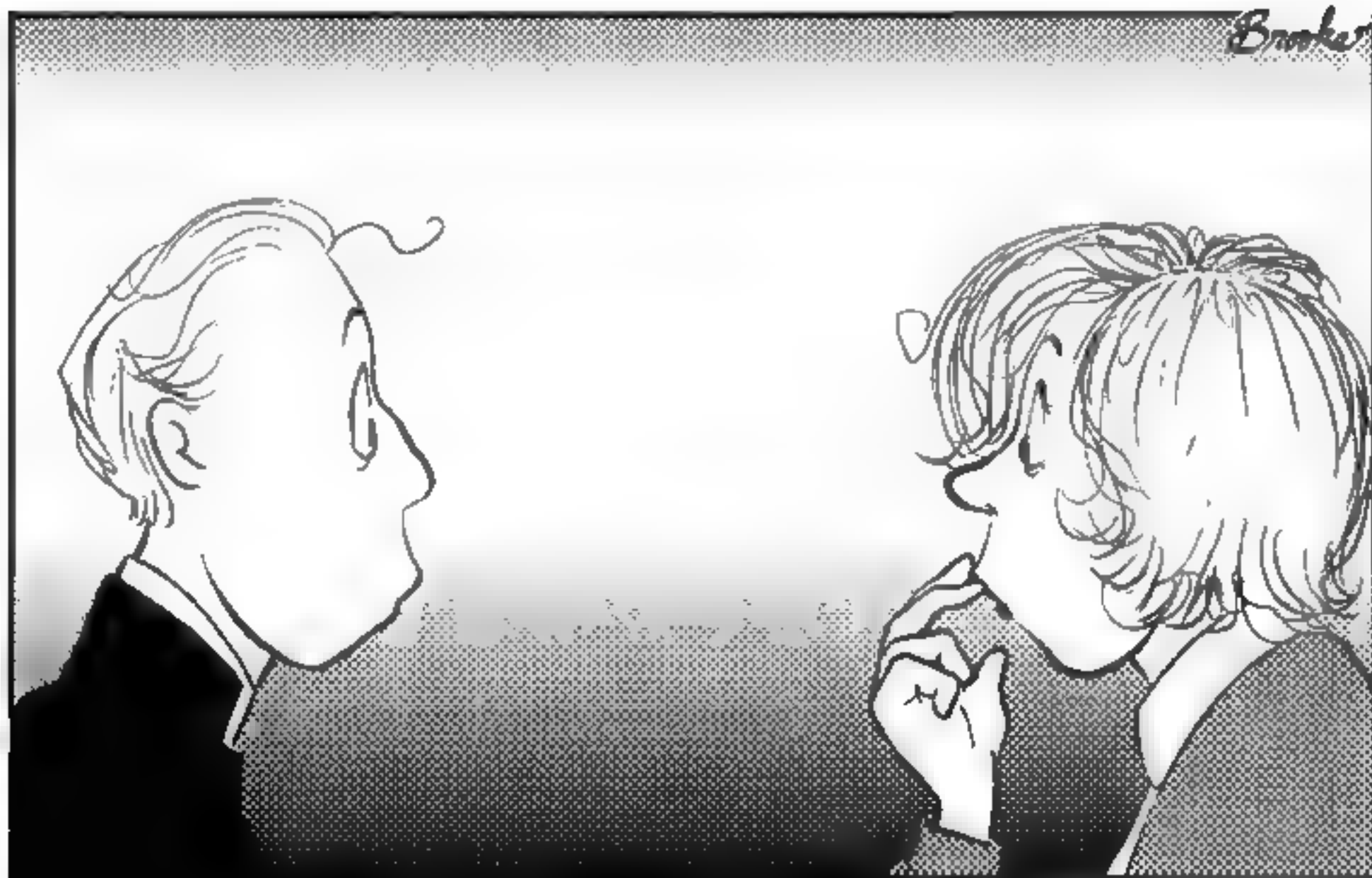
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Brooke

BUT...

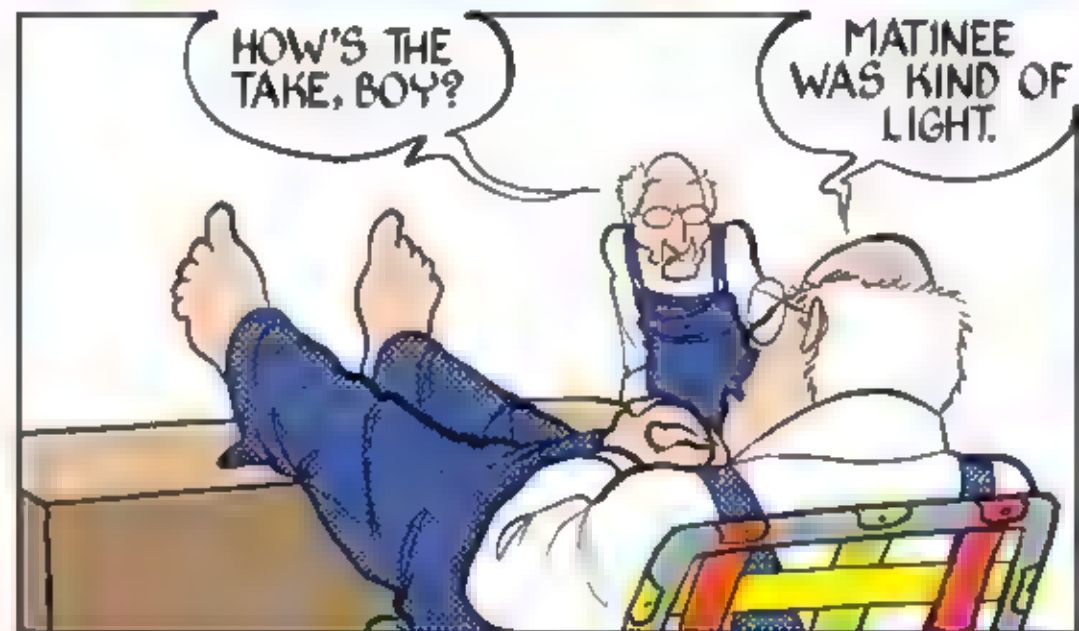
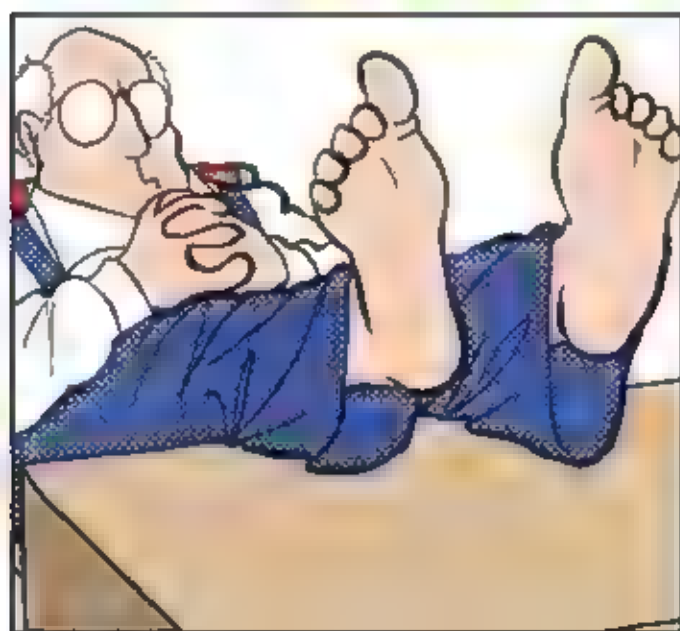
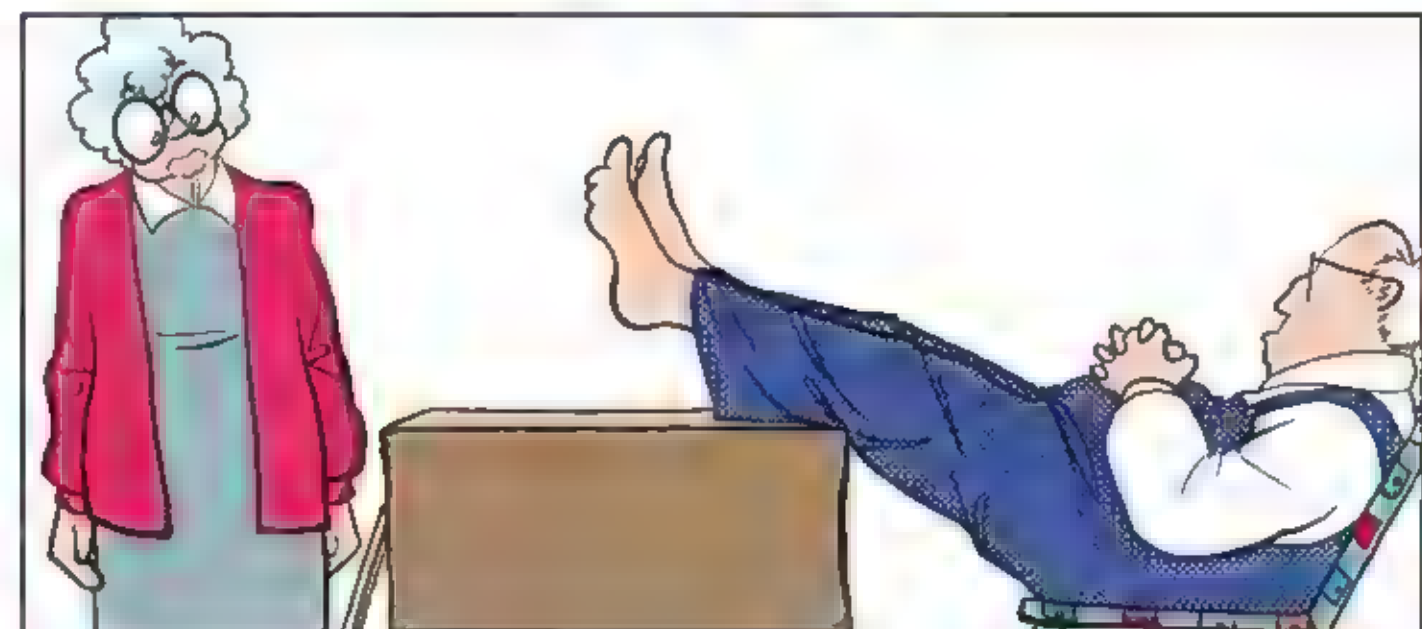
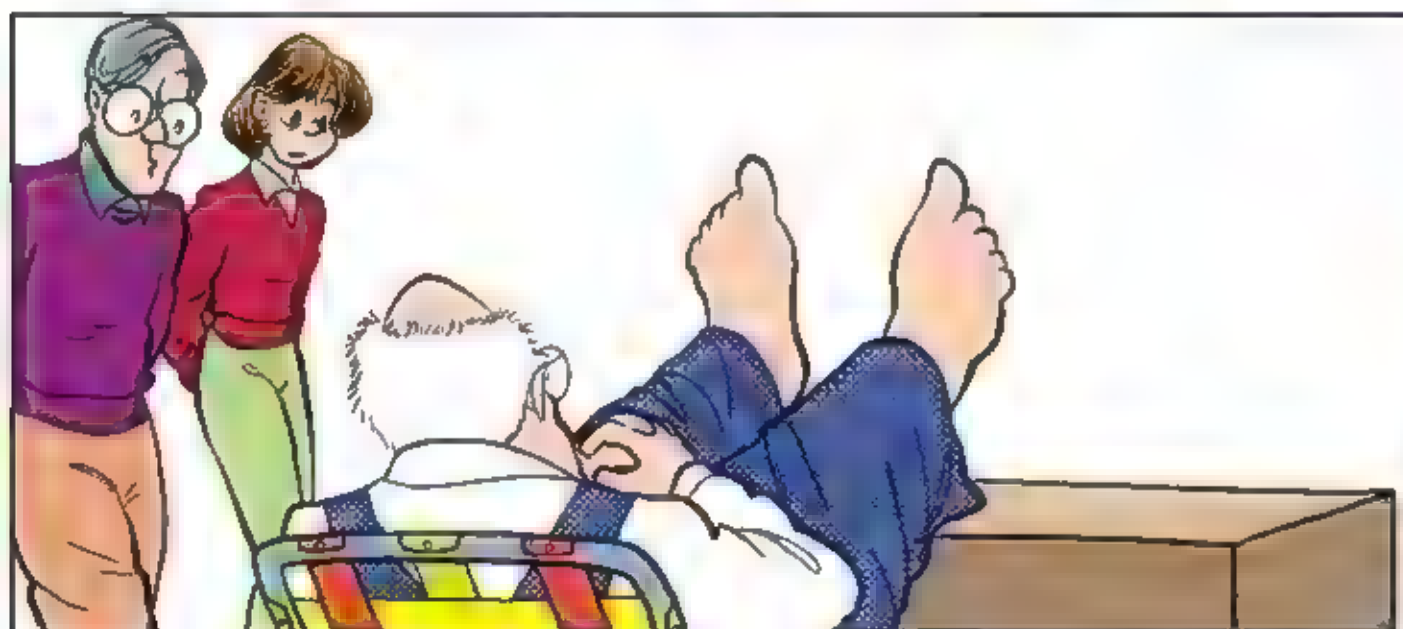
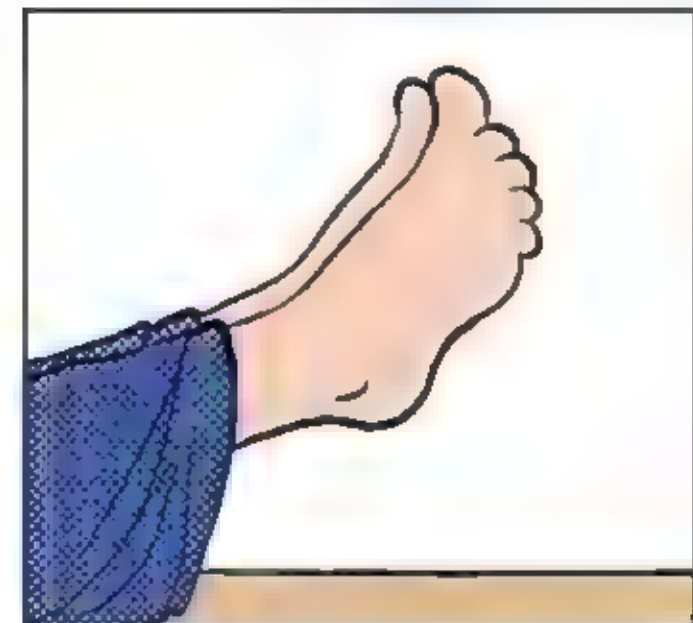
...IF YOU WERE TO HAPPEN  
TO NOTICE THE LIST OF  
ADDRESSES ON MY DESK,  
AND YOU CAN READ  
UPSIDE DOWN...



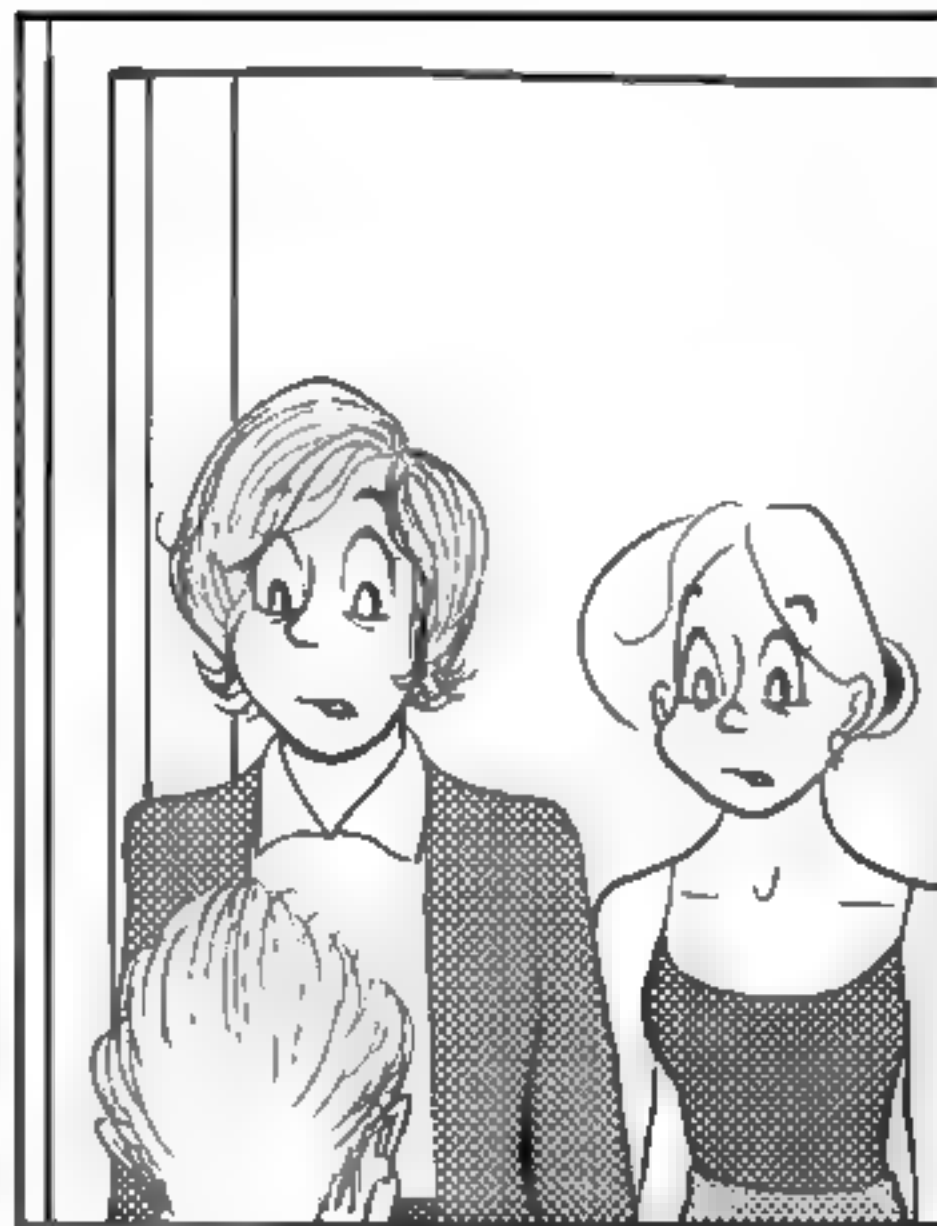
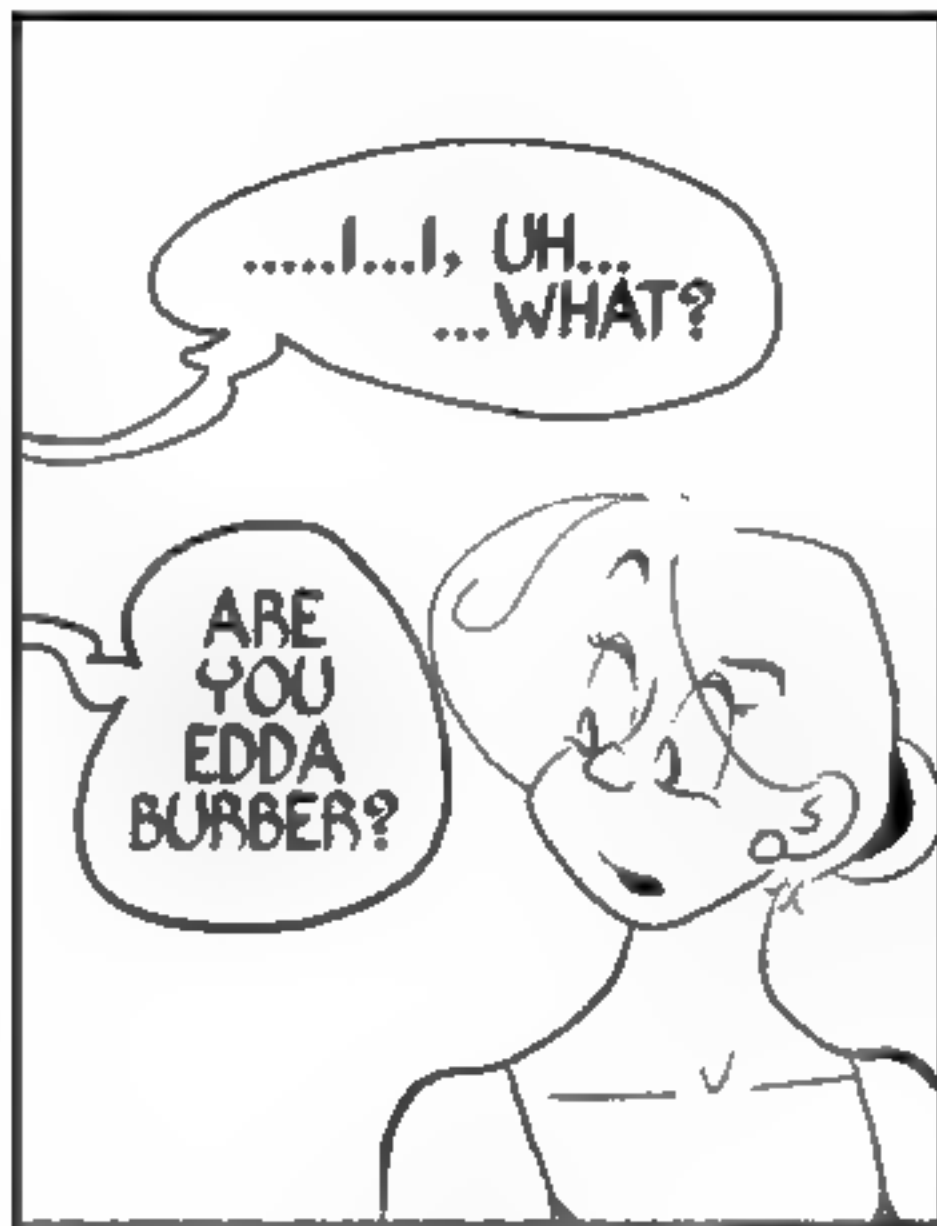




# 9 CHICKWEED LANE



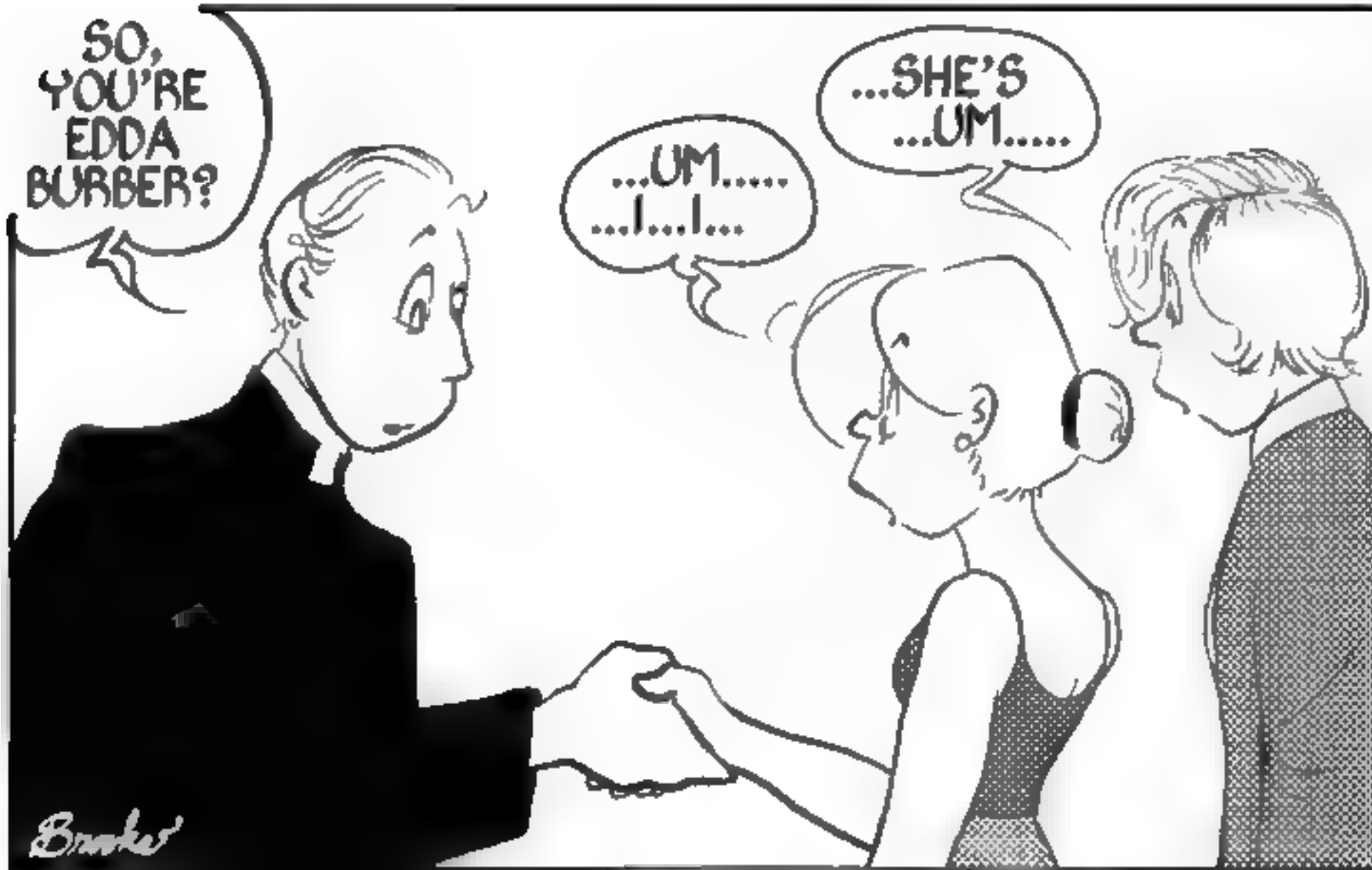




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WHAT IS SETH GOING TO SAY?

I DON'T KNOW. HE'LL PROBABLY TELL THE TRUTH.



I WAS JUST WONDERING IF...

COFFEE, FATHER?



THANK YOU VERY MUCH. ...I WAS JUST SAYING...

BISCOTTI? TOLL HOUSE COOKIES?



Brooke

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OR HE'LL JUST FEED HIM TO DEATH.





I WAS ASKED TO FIND EDDA  
AND INQUIRE AS TO  
SISTER ARAMUS' WHERE-  
ABOUTS.

THEN  
YOU DON'T  
REALIZE.



*Brooke*

REALIZE  
WHAT?



HE'S  
GOING TO  
TELL HIM.  
I HAVE TO  
GO OUT AND FESS UP.

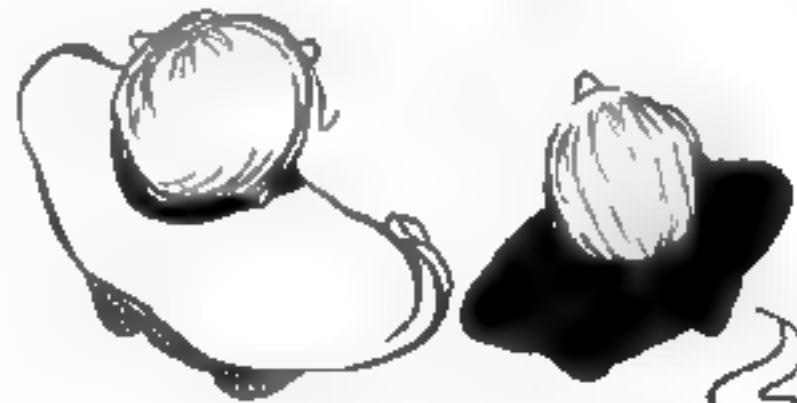
I'M SURPRISED  
YOU DIDN'T NOTICE  
THE RESEMBLANCE.



DIANE,  
FATHER DURLY  
IS LOOKING  
FOR YOUR  
AUNT.



THIS IS DIANE FALLON...  
...SISTER ARAMUS'  
NIECE.



OH, WELL, THIS IS  
FORTUITOUS. IT'S NICE  
TO MEET YOU, MISS FALLON.

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*Brooke*



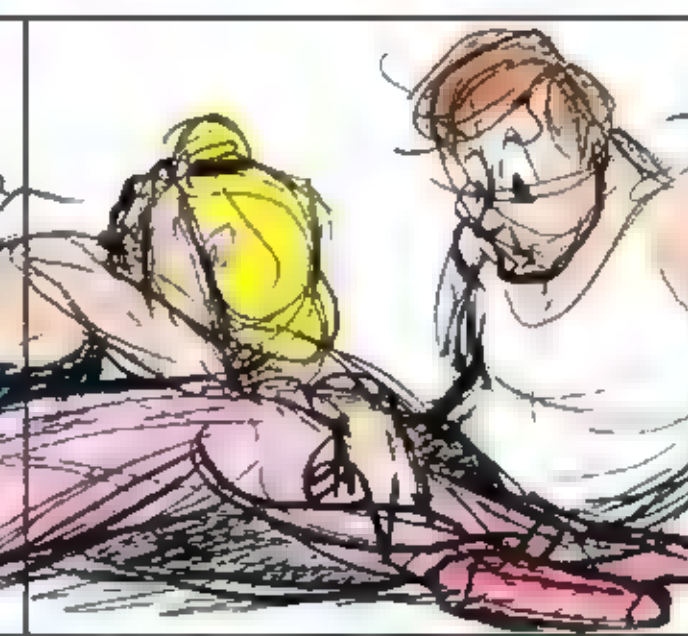
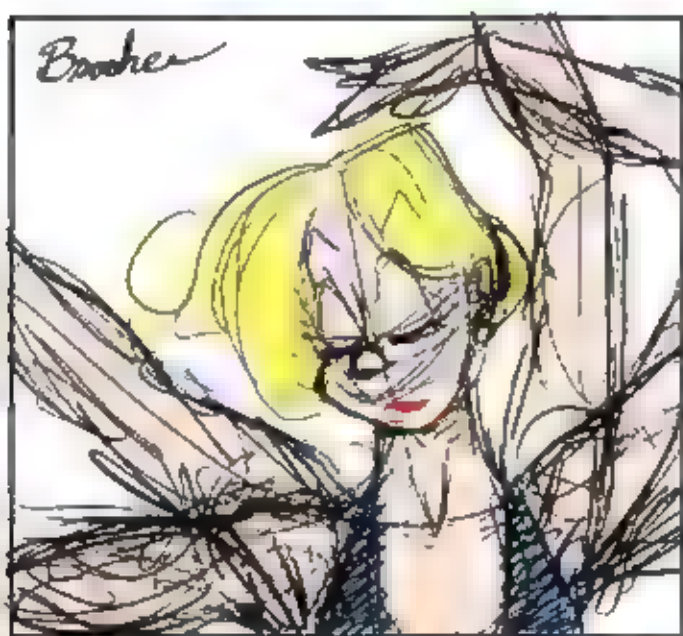
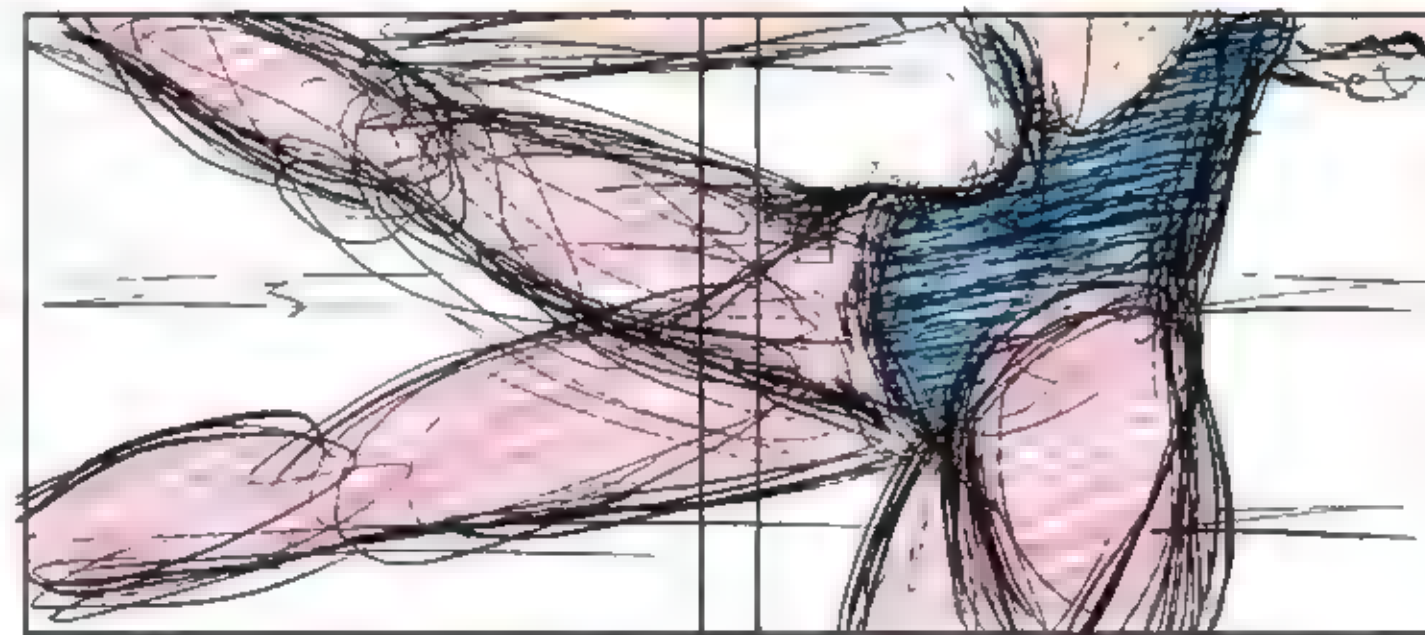
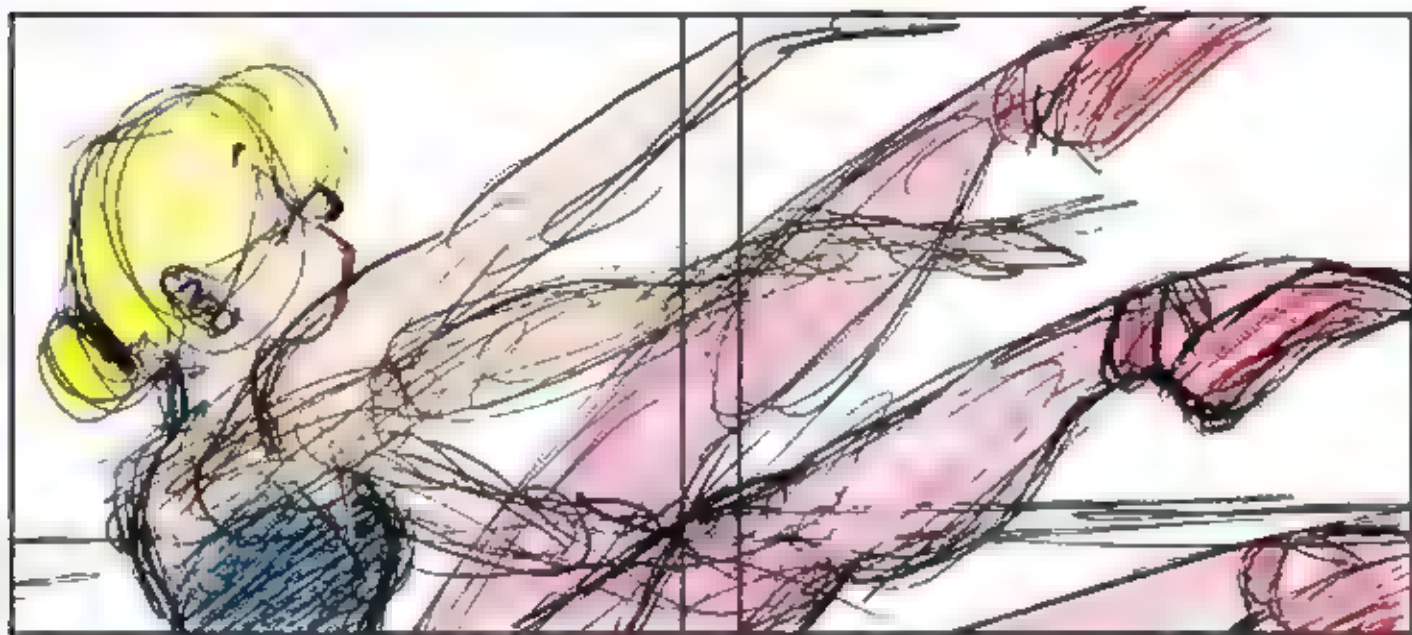
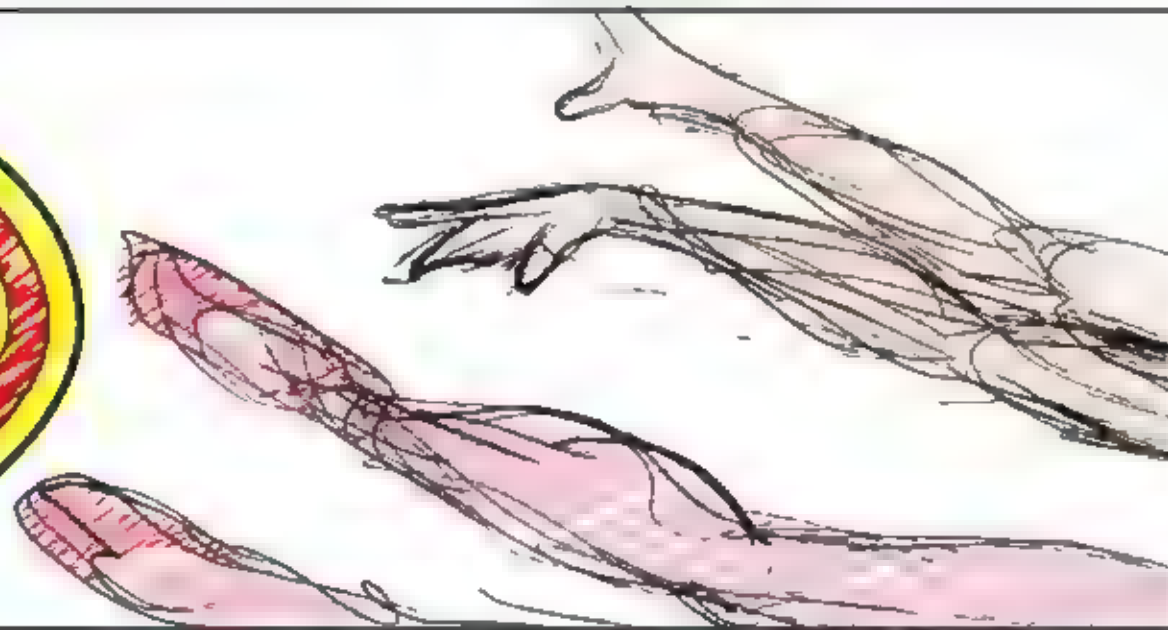
DOES  
SHE  
ALWAYS  
STARE  
LIKE  
THAT?

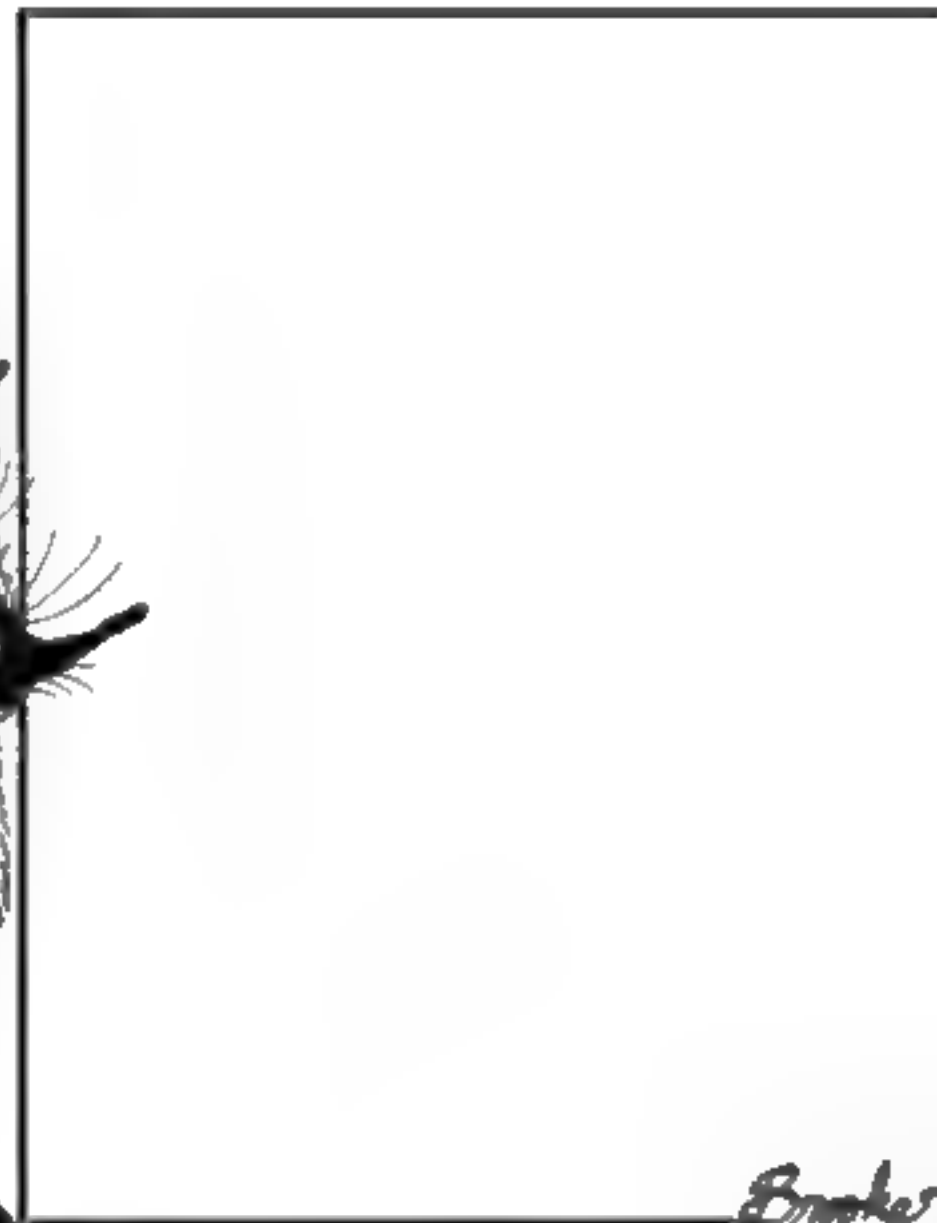
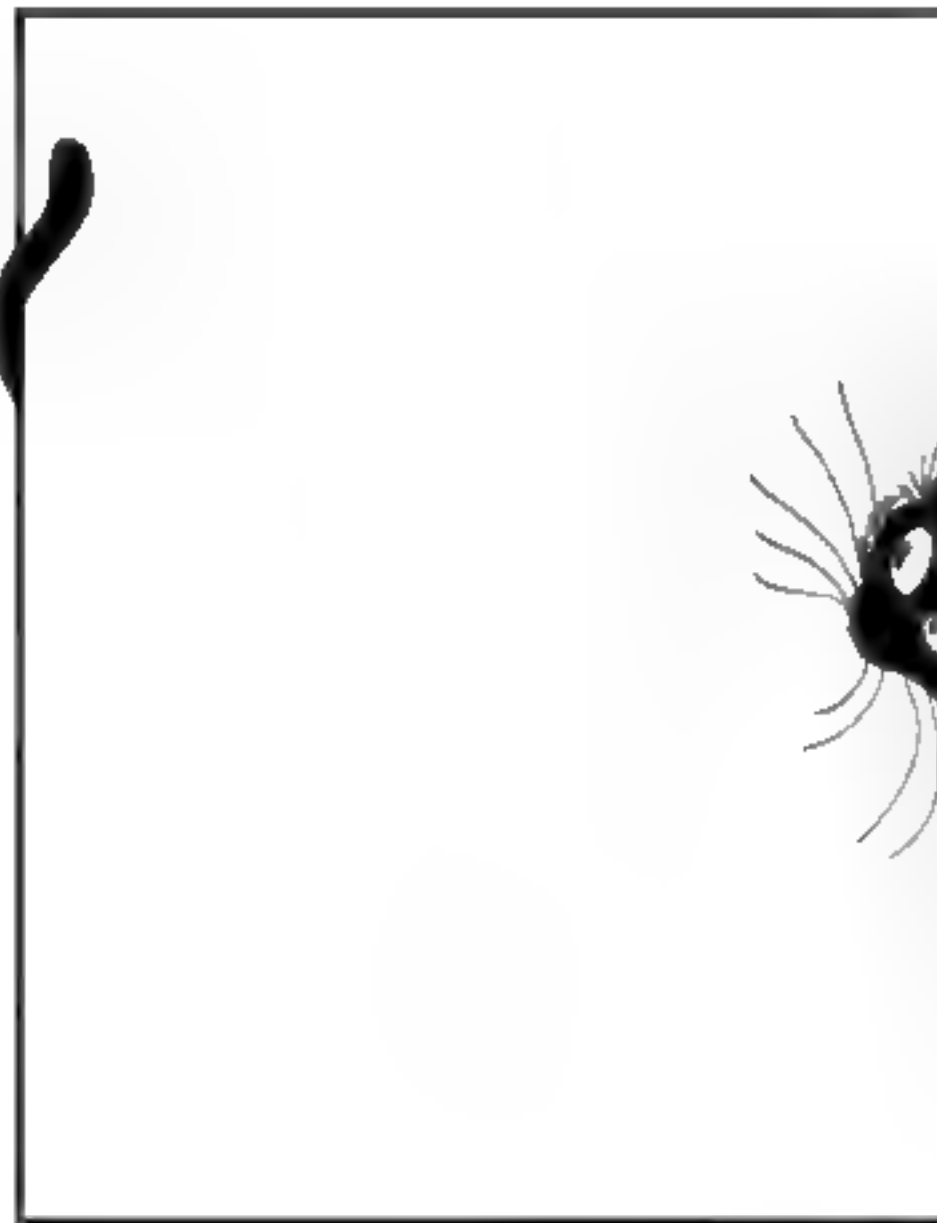
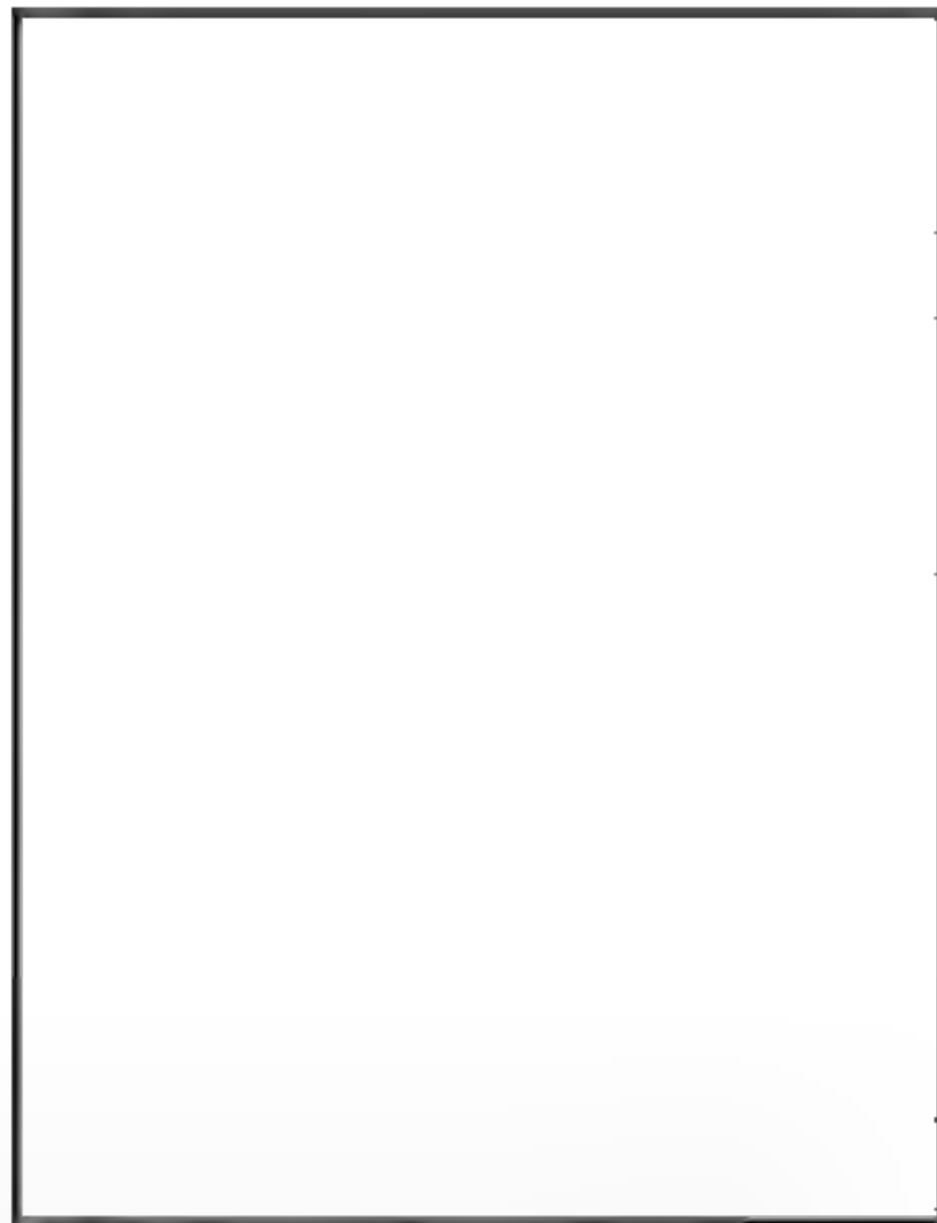
IT'S NOT  
A MEDICAL  
CONDITION.  
SHE JUST  
DOES  
IT.





9  
CHICKWEED  
LANE





Brooke





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ARE YOU AND  
YOUR AUNT  
VERY CLOSE?

WELL,  
SOMETIMES  
WE DON'T  
SPEAK FOR  
A WHILE, BUT  
WE ALWAYS  
CATCH UP.

WE'RE MORE LIKE FRIENDS.  
I MEAN, WE BOTH SHARE  
THE SAME NAME, WE'RE  
NOT THAT FAR APART IN  
AGE...AND PEOPLE TELL US  
WE LOOK A LOT ALIKE.

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odd...

OH, MY  
LORD!...  
...HE'S  
CAUGHT  
ON!

*Brooke*  
SORRY,  
I DON'T SEE A  
RESEMBLANCE  
AT ALL.

IT MUST BE THE DIFFERENCE  
IN YOUR AGES AND SIZE.  
YOUR AUNT IS  
MUCH TALLER,  
AND DEFINITELY  
OLDER LOOKING.



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SHE'S  
NOT ALL  
THAT MUCH  
OLDER.  
ONLY  
NINE  
YEARS.

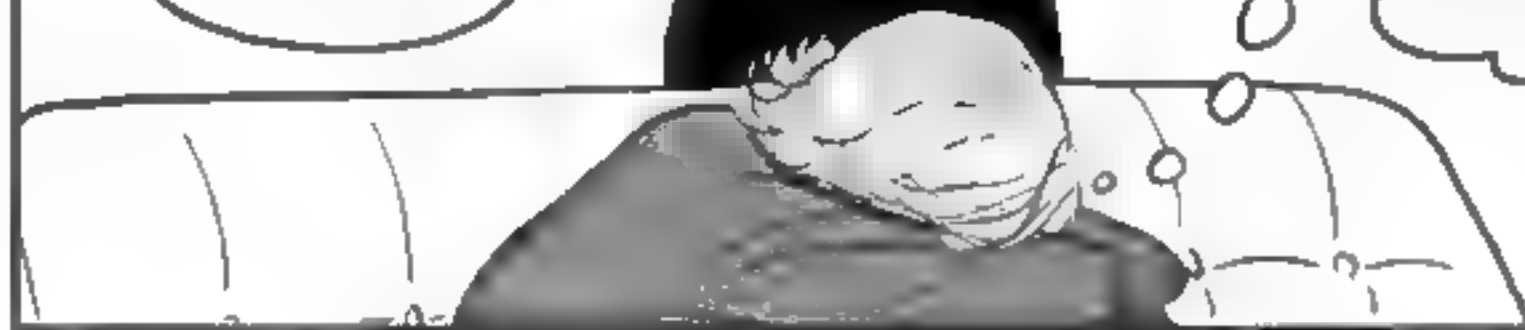


YES,  
BUT IT CAN  
MAKE A BIG  
DIFFERENCE...

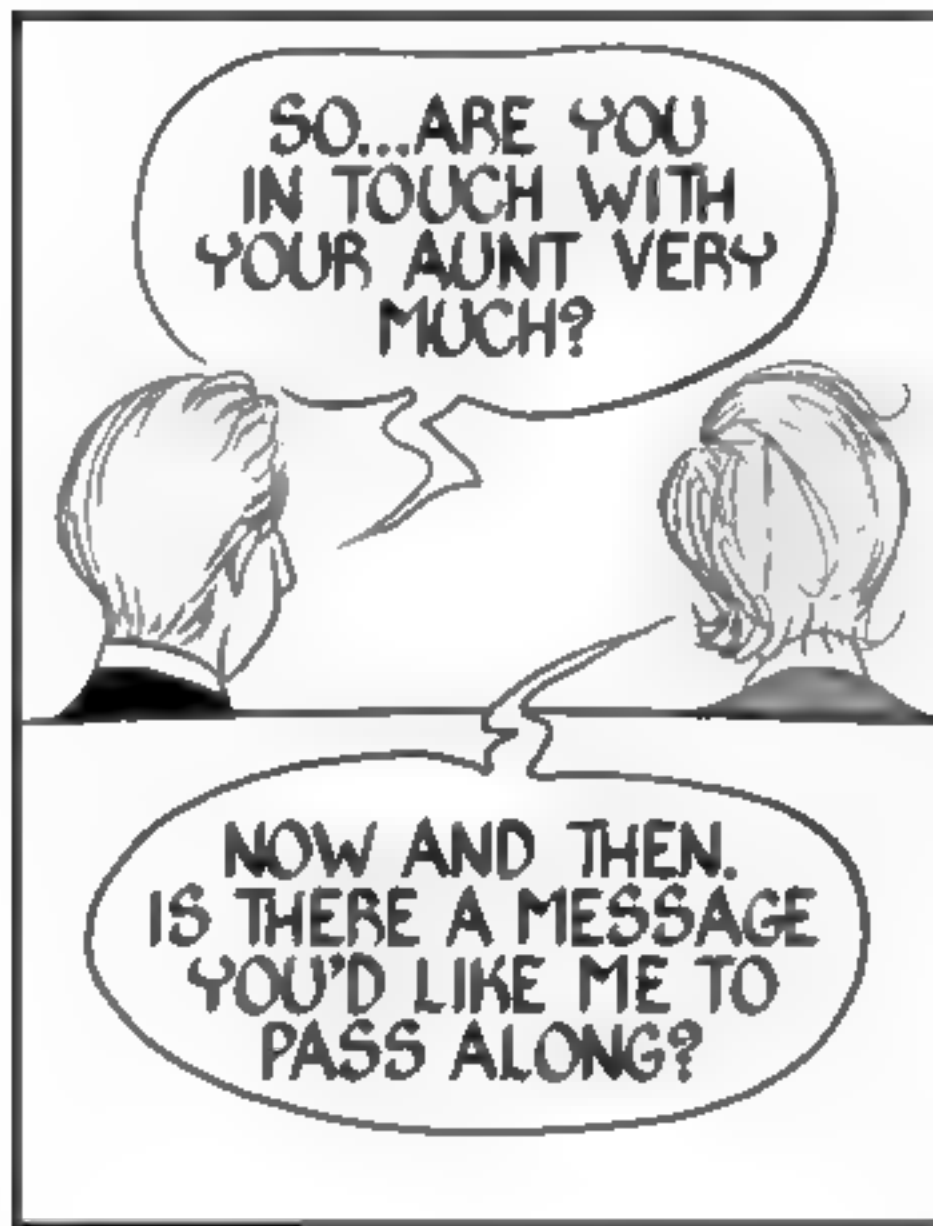
...SOMETIMES  
A REALLY  
DECIDED  
CONTRAST  
IN AGE...  
...PLAIN  
TO SEE...  
...I MEAN,  
JUST THE  
EYES  
ALONE...



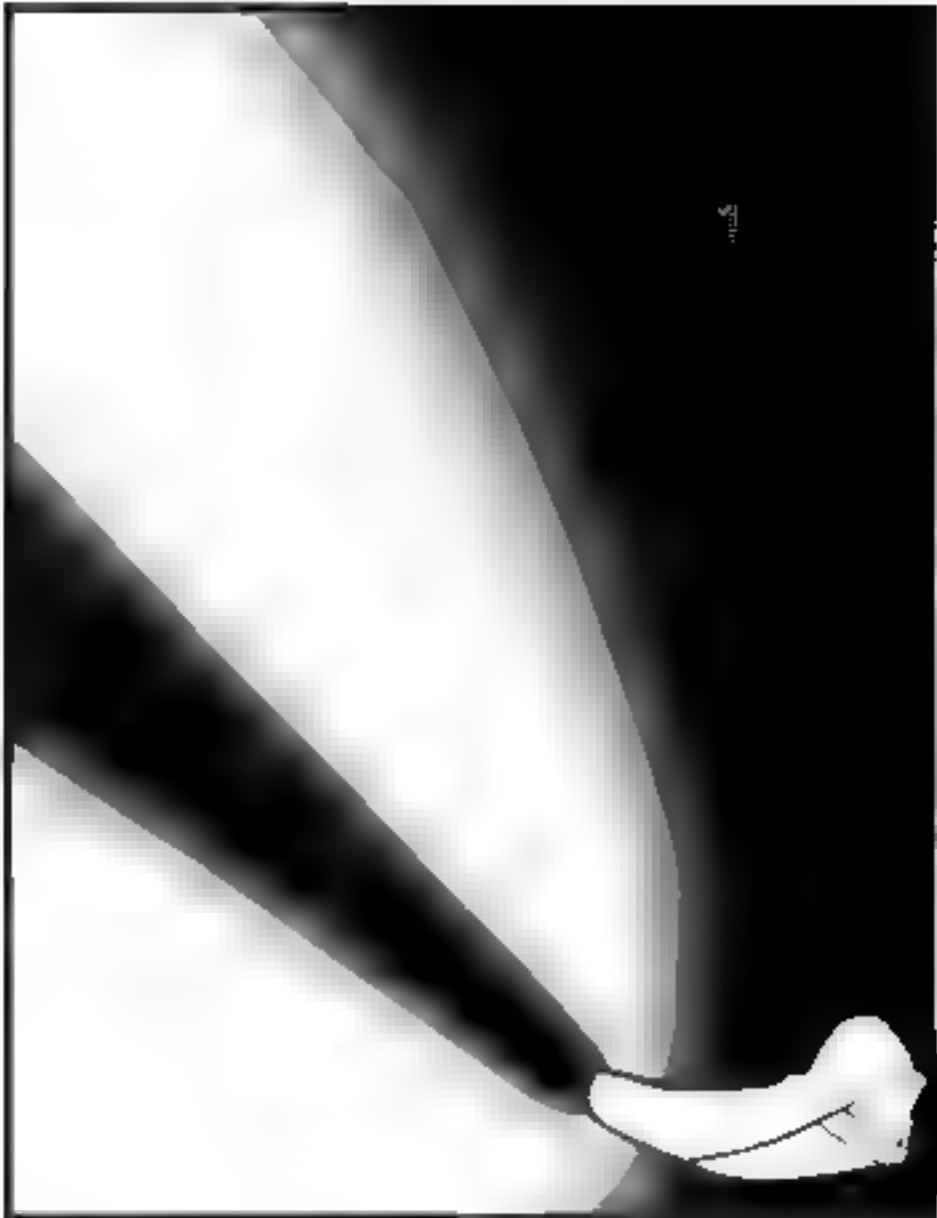
RIGHT, RIGHT!  
SHE'S GETTING  
UP THERE!  
AN OLD BAT!  
MESSAGE  
RECEIVED AND  
NOTED, LOUD  
AND CLEAR!  
ROGER, TEN-FOUR,  
OVER AND  
OUT!...

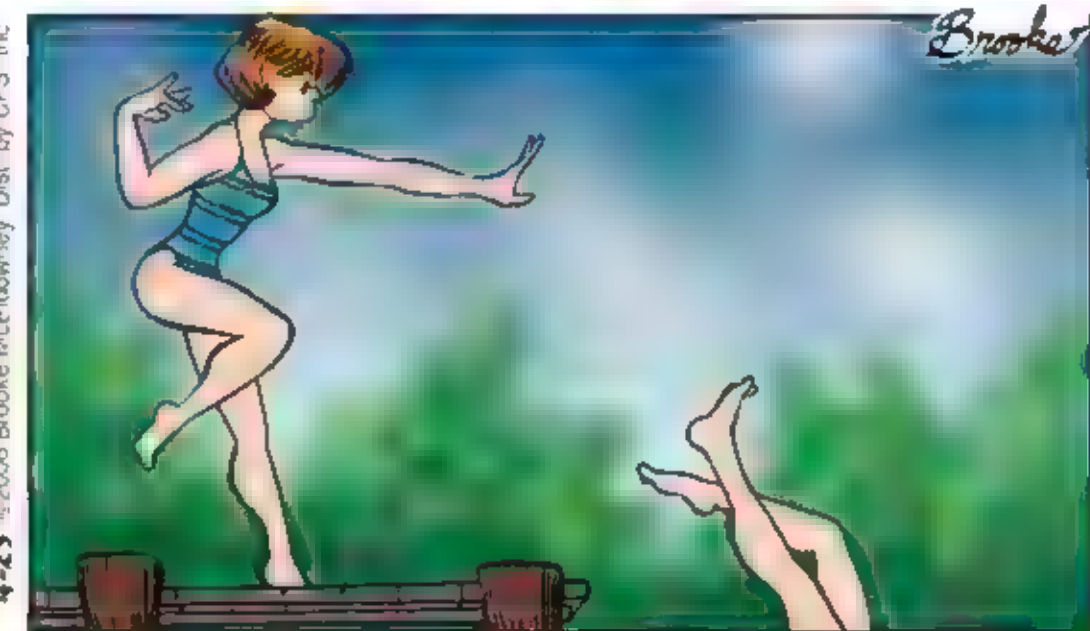
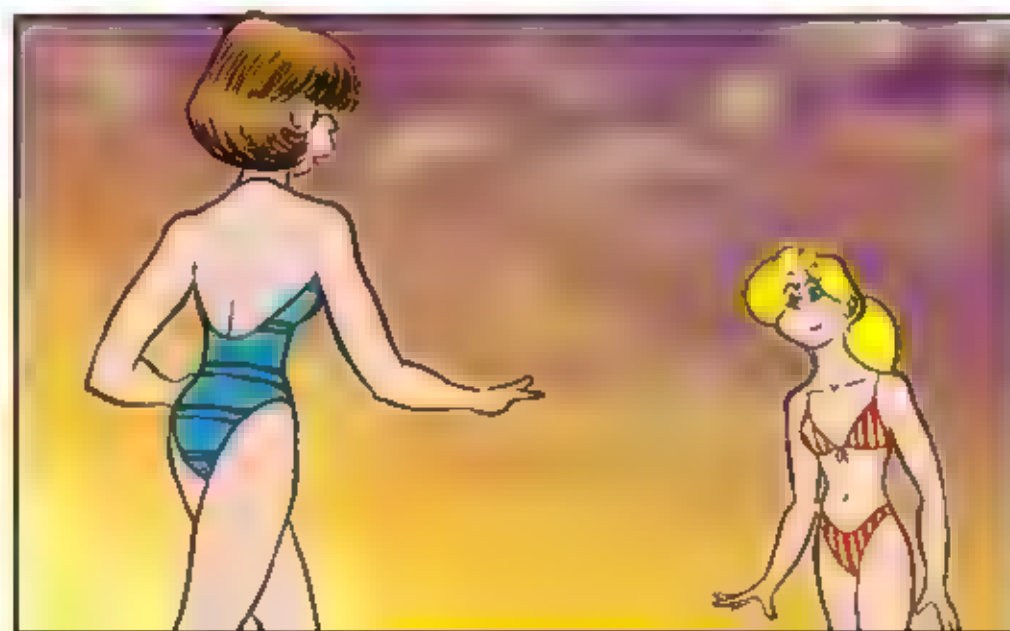
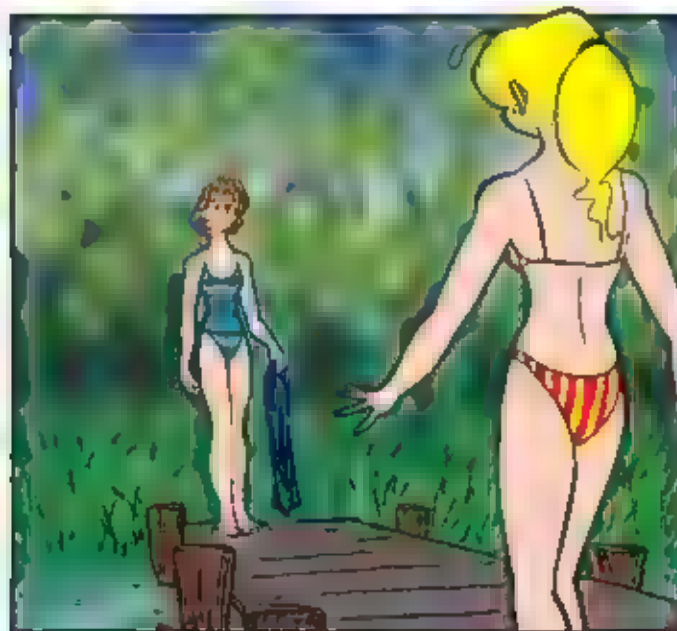
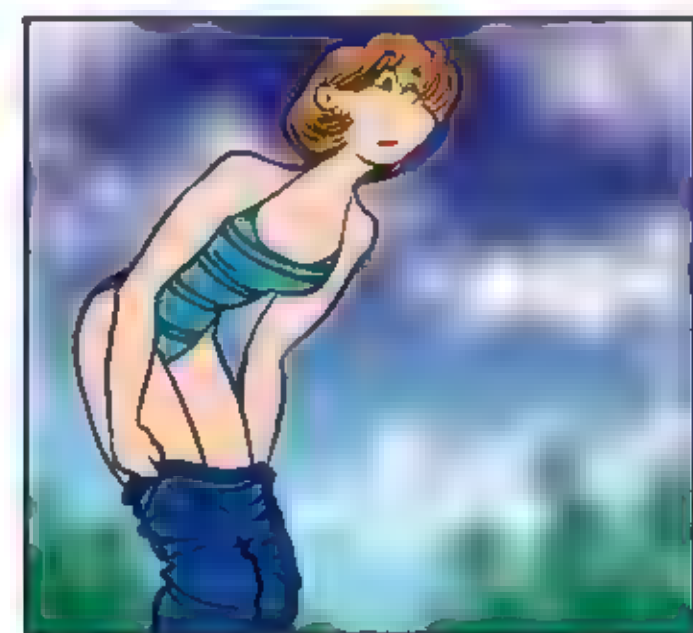
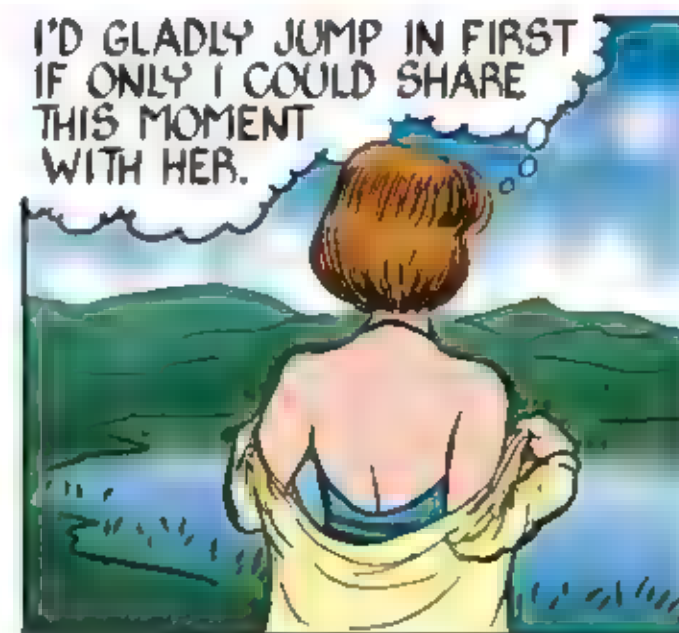
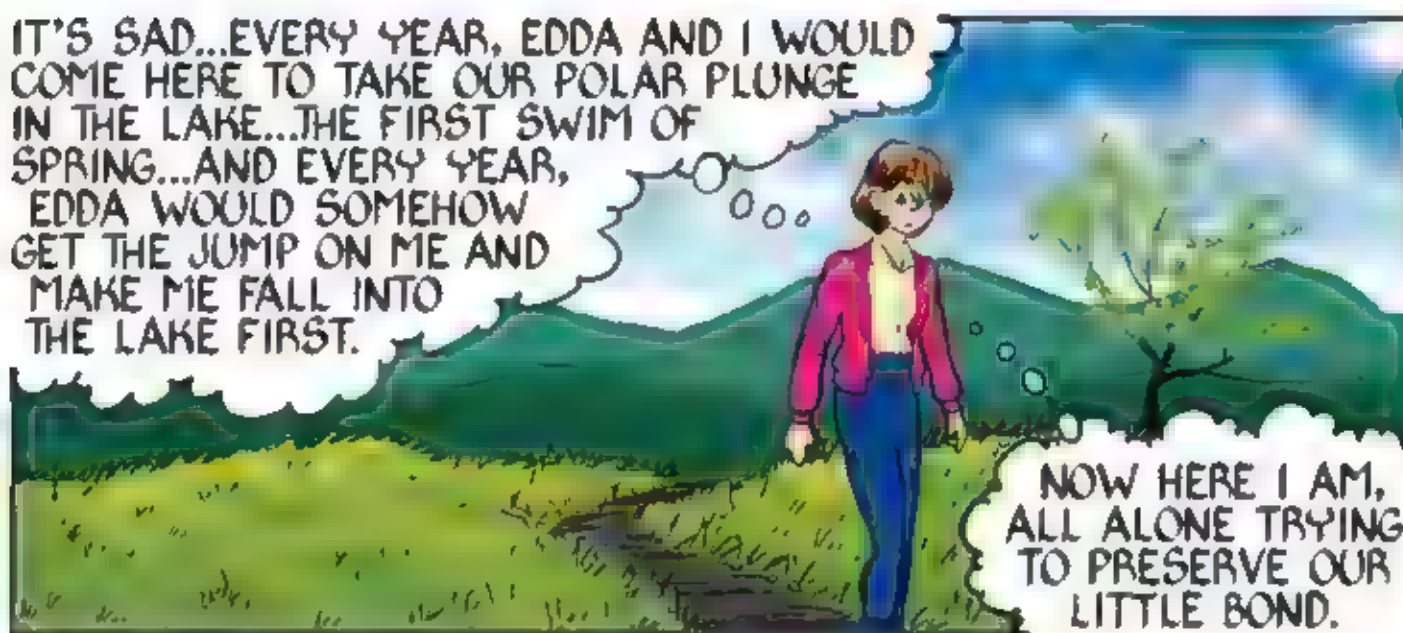


Brooke



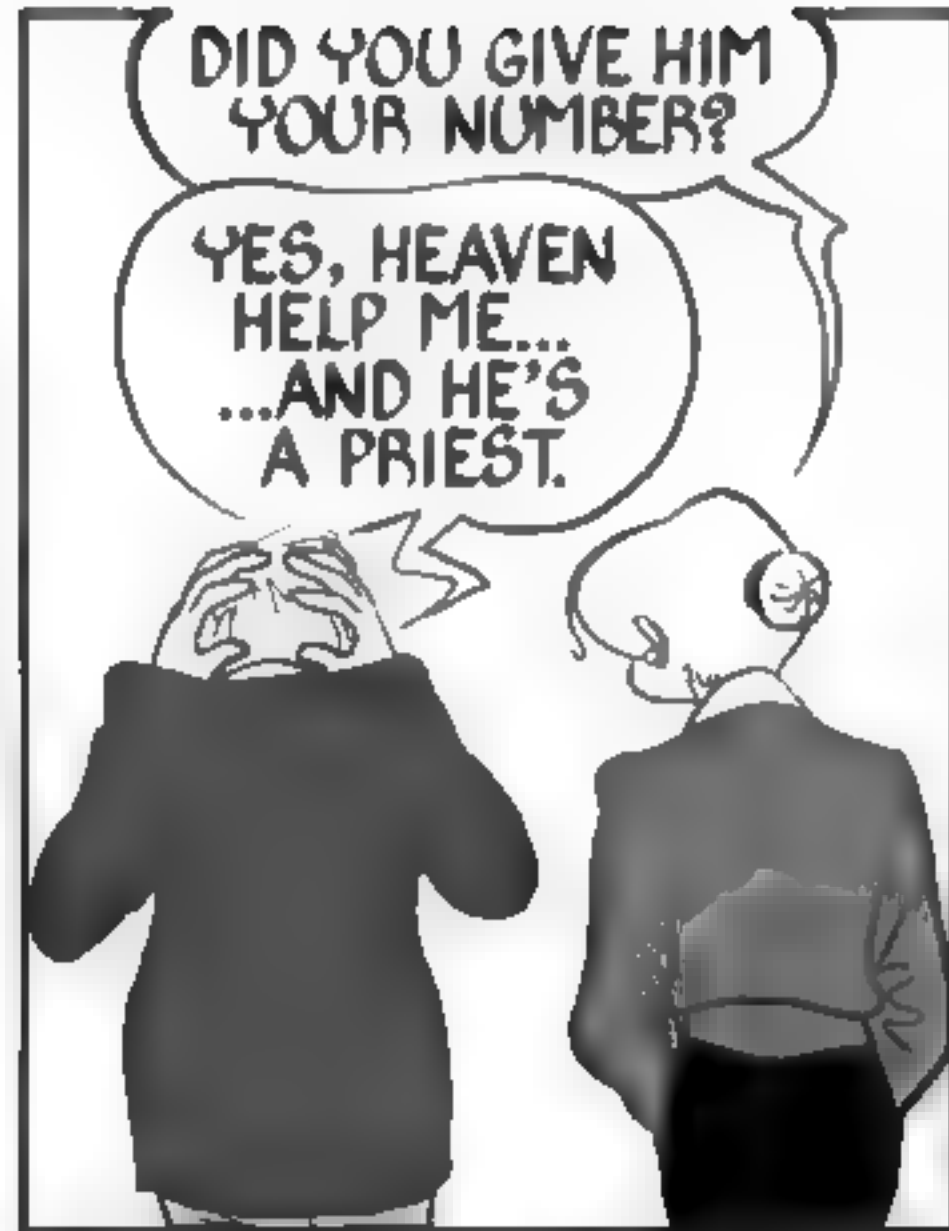
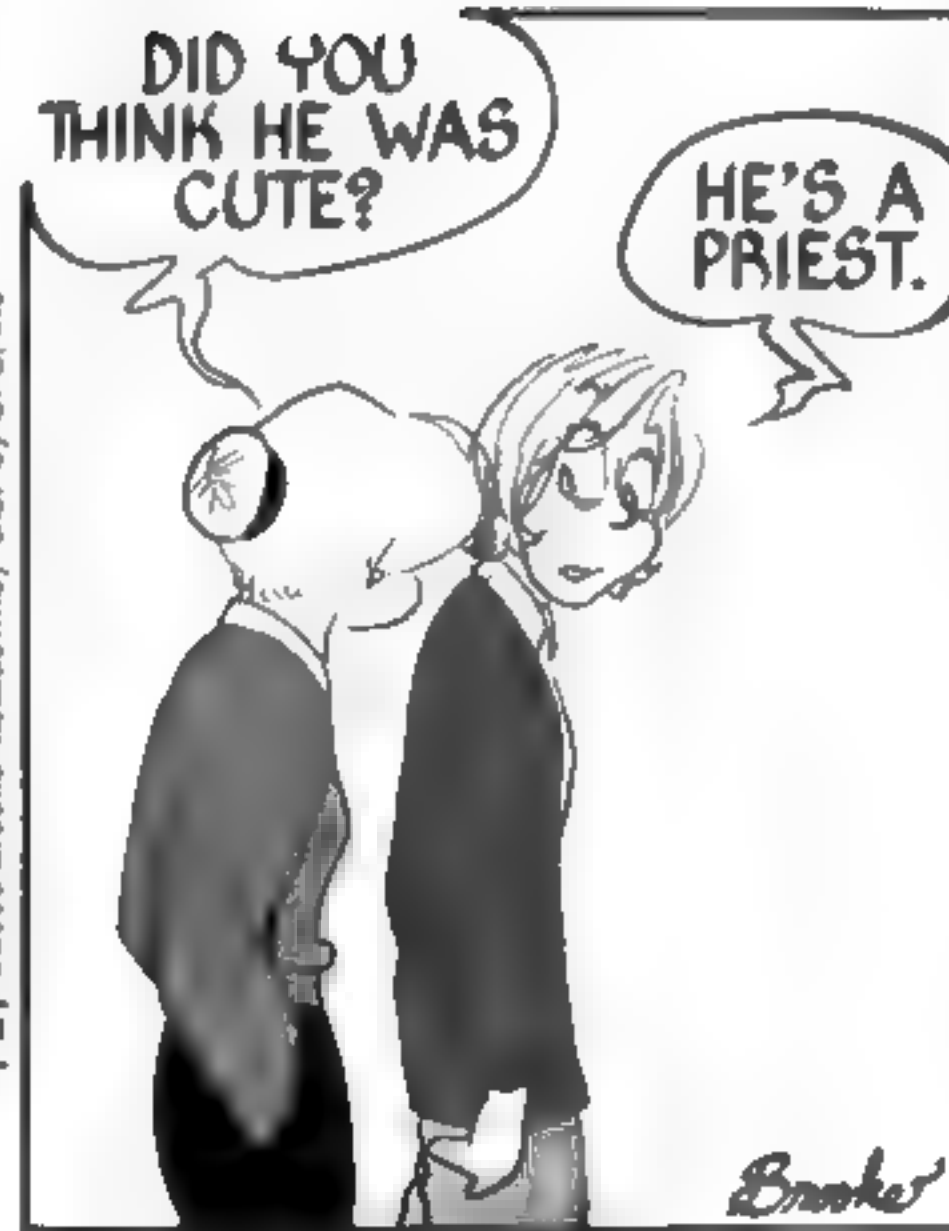








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I CAN'T  
BELIEVE I'M  
DOING THIS.



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I'M  
CALLING  
FOR  
SPIRITUAL  
GUIDANCE.  
CAN YOU  
PROVIDE IT  
OVER  
THE  
PHONE?



CERTAINLY.  
WE TAKE  
PLASTIC.



SPIRITUAL  
GUIDANCE  
15¢

Brooke

THE THING IS,  
I'M TRYING TO MASTER  
EMOTIONS THAT I FEEL  
ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH  
MY POSITION IN THE  
WORLD. I NEED TO  
SPEAK TO SOMEONE  
DETACHED FROM MY  
CUSTOMARY FRAME  
OF REFERENCE.



Brooke

THIS IS AN  
EMERGENCY,  
CLARICE.  
...CAN WE  
RESCHEDULE?



SPIRITUAL  
GUIDANCE

15

I HAVE TO STRESS, THIS  
IS AN ISSUE OF EXTREME  
DELICACY. I DON'T EVEN  
KNOW IF I SHOULD BE  
SPEAKING OVER THIS  
PHONE.



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JUST A SECOND...  
I'LL HAVE THE SIGNAL  
ENCRYPTED.



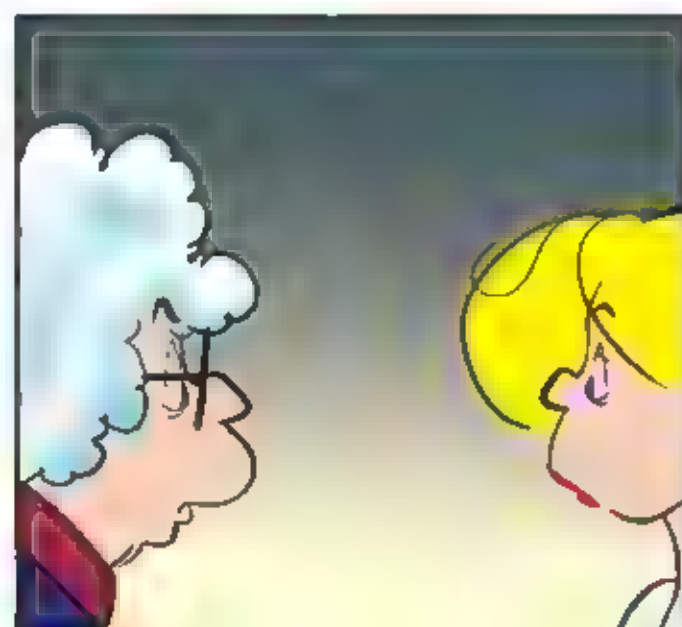
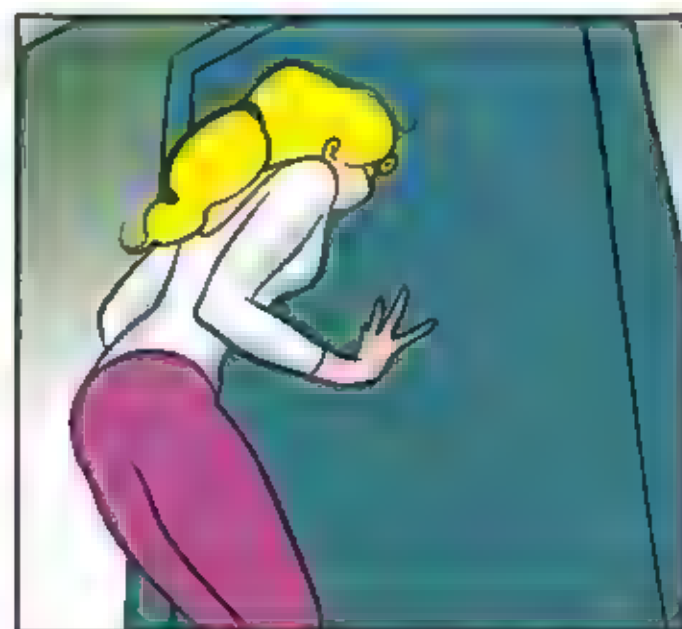
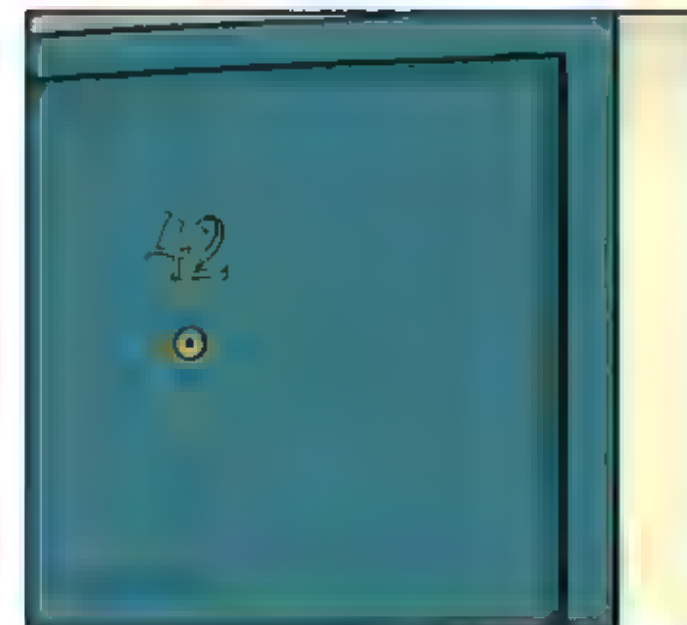
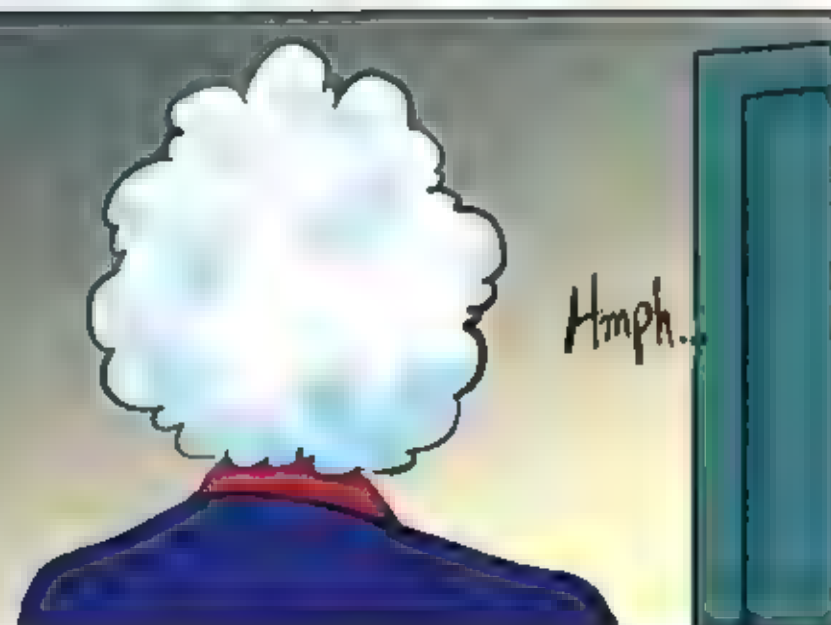
*Brooke*



CONTINUE.

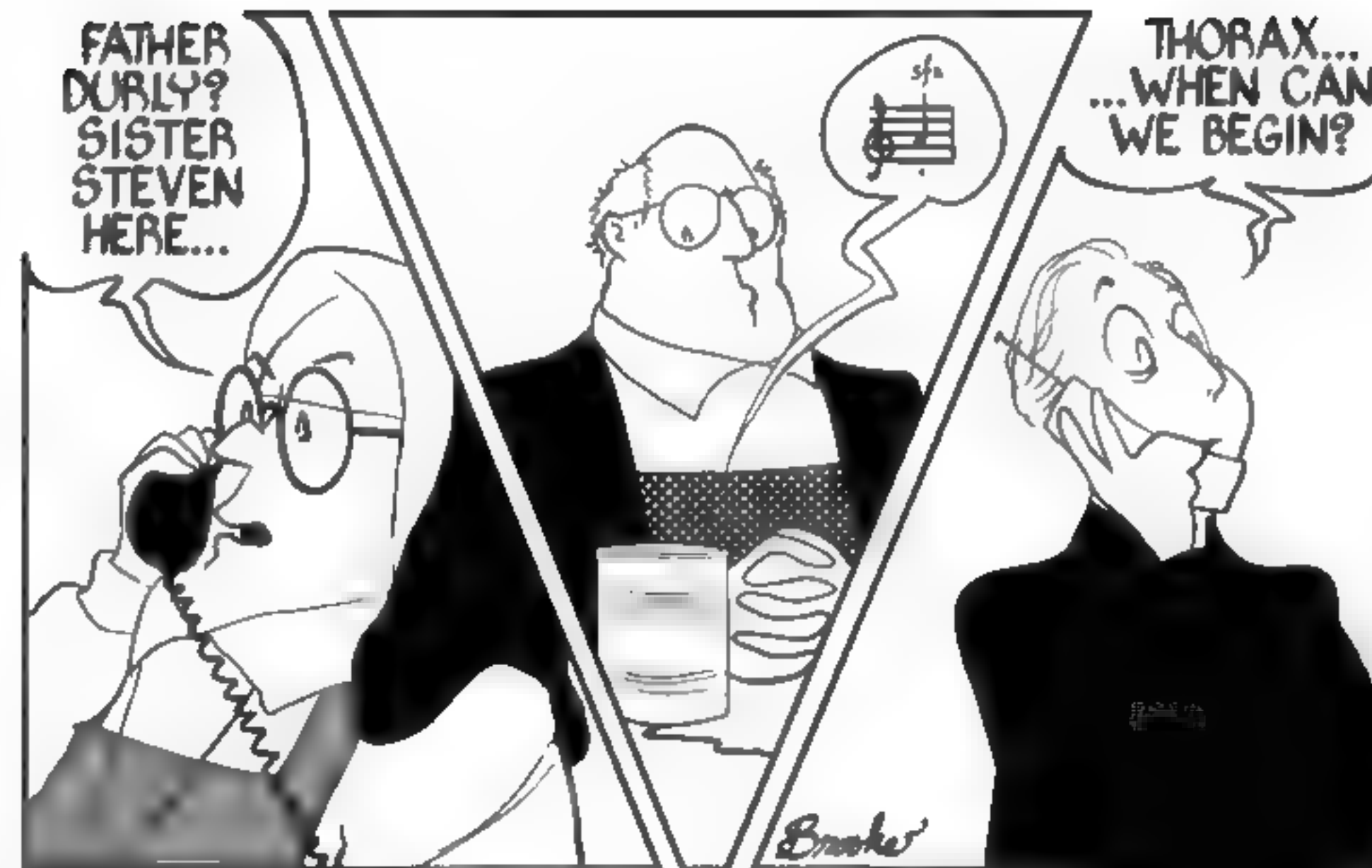






Brooke

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IN MY CONSIDERED OPINION,  
FATHER DURLY, THE PRO-  
FESSIONAL/INTELLECTUAL  
YOU AND THE PRIMAL YOU  
ARE IN CONFLICT, GROWING  
FURTHER APART AS...



...HOLD ON...I THINK MY  
LINE IS BEING TAPPED.



*Broke*



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"SHOO"?

THAT'S  
TECHNO-  
JARGON.







I'VE JUST BEEN FEELING  
THE NEED TO TALK TO  
SOMEONE ABOUT WHAT'S  
GOING ON IN MY LIFE.  
THEN A FRIEND TOLD ME  
THAT YOU ARE...  
...YOU  
ARE...



...AN OLD COOT WITH A  
MODICUM OF WISDOM  
TO DISPENSE, WHILE BEING  
JUST BONKERS ENOUGH  
THAT NOBODY WILL LISTEN  
TO ME IF I BREAK OUR  
PACT OF CONFIDENTIALITY?

WELL...  
...YES.



WELL, I HATE TO BURST  
YOUR BUBBLE, BUT I AM  
MERELY AN ENTITY FROM  
ANOTHER PLANET, MY NAME  
IS ROBIN GOODFELLOW,  
AND I AM PARTIALLY  
HYDROGENATED.



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WHEN CAN WE  
BEGIN?

*Brooke*



SO HE SAID MAYBE WE'D  
RUN INTO EACH OTHER...  
...AND BEFORE I KNEW IT,  
I SAID MAYBE IN CENTRAL  
PARK, AND HE SAID  
PERHAPS AT THE BETHESDA  
TERRACE.



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AND I SAID I GO THERE  
OFTEN, AND FATHER DURLY  
SAID HE DOES TOO AND  
HOW STRANGE IT WAS  
WE HADN'T RUN INTO EACH  
OTHER BEFORE, AND I SAID  
IT WAS  
WEIRD...



SO  
YOU'D  
LIKE TO  
KNOW HOW  
TO GET TO  
THE BETHESDA  
TERRACE?

SETH, THIS IS FATHER  
DURLY...DO YOU KNOW,  
BY ANY CHANCE, WHERE  
THE BETHESDA  
TERRACE  
IS?

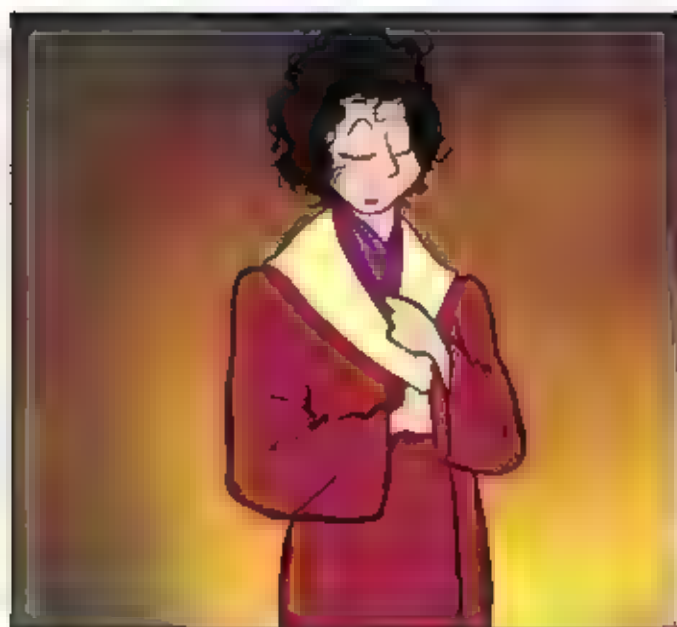
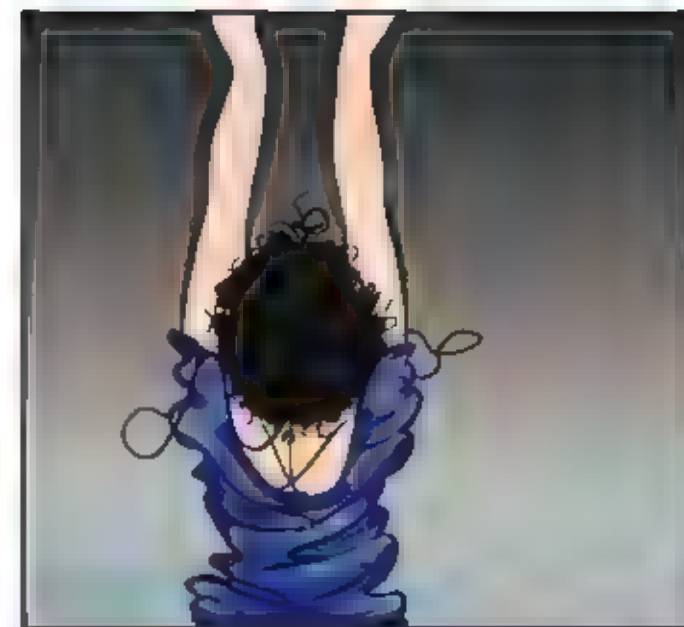
OH,  
PLEASE.

Brooke

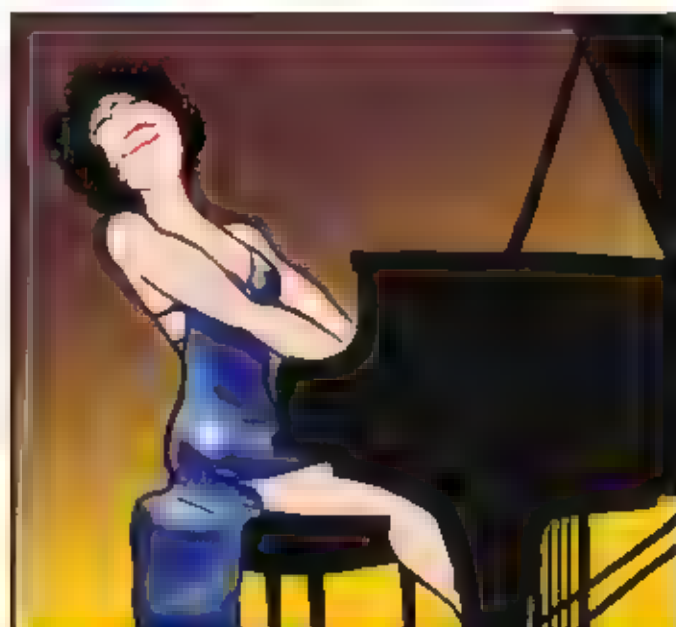
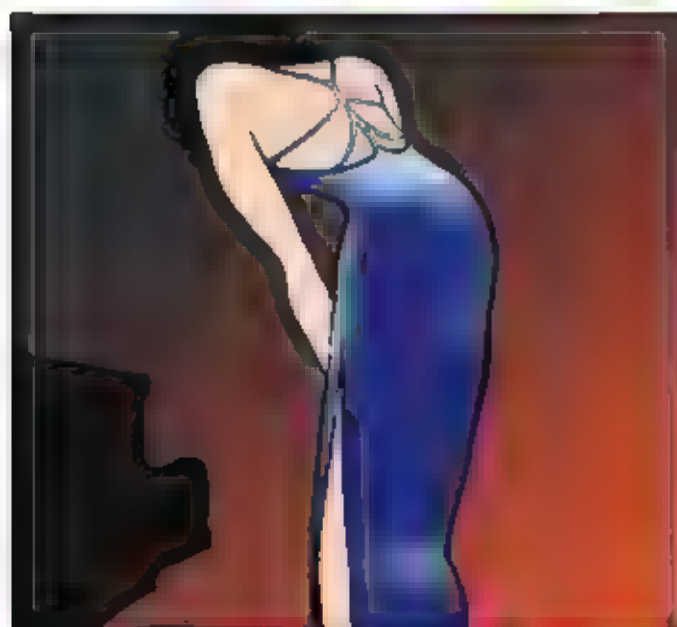
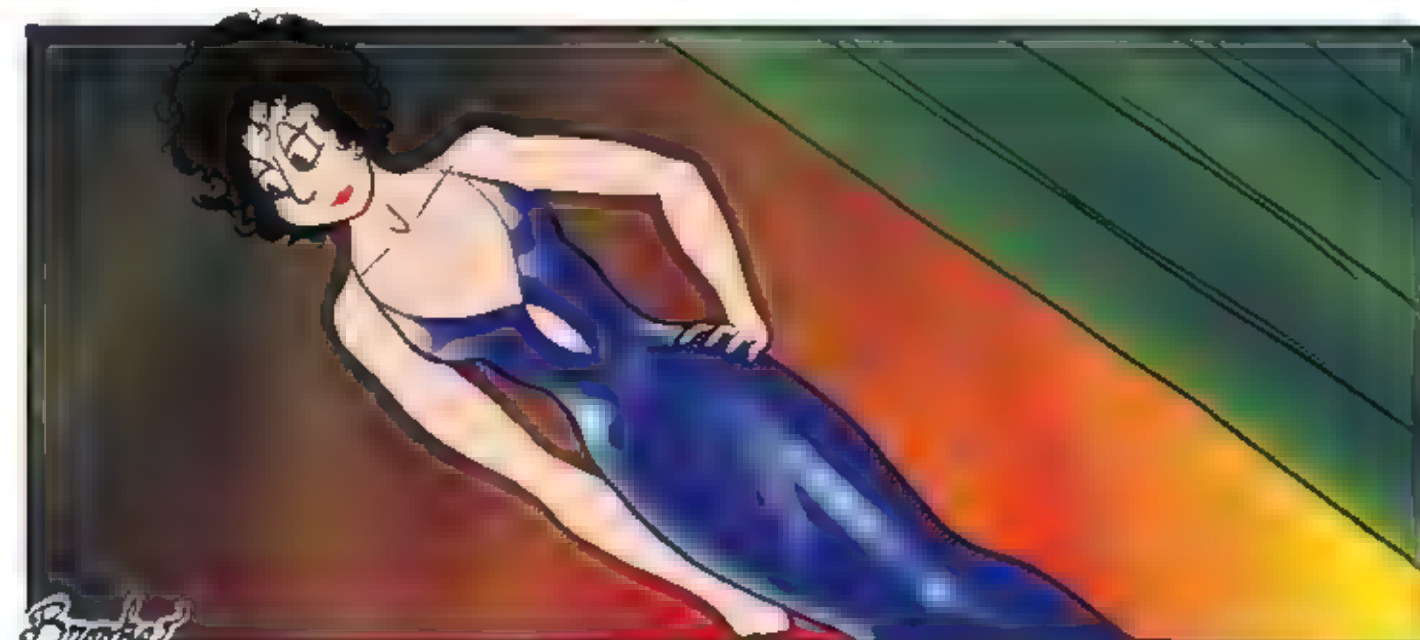
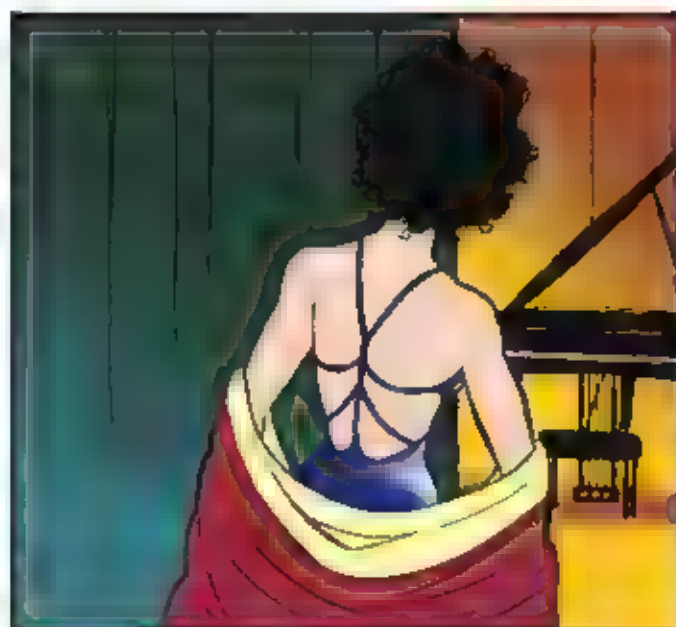




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I ABSOLUTELY HATE THAT DRESS.

WHY?

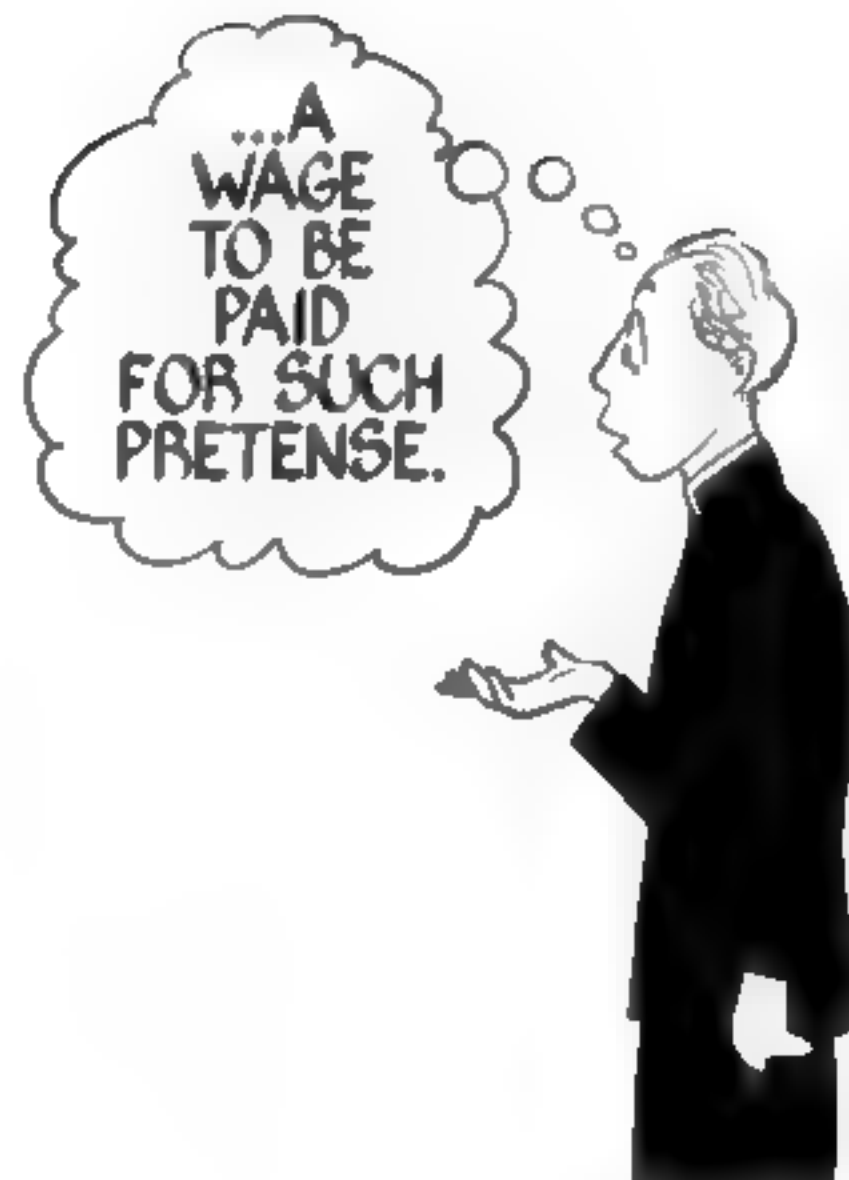
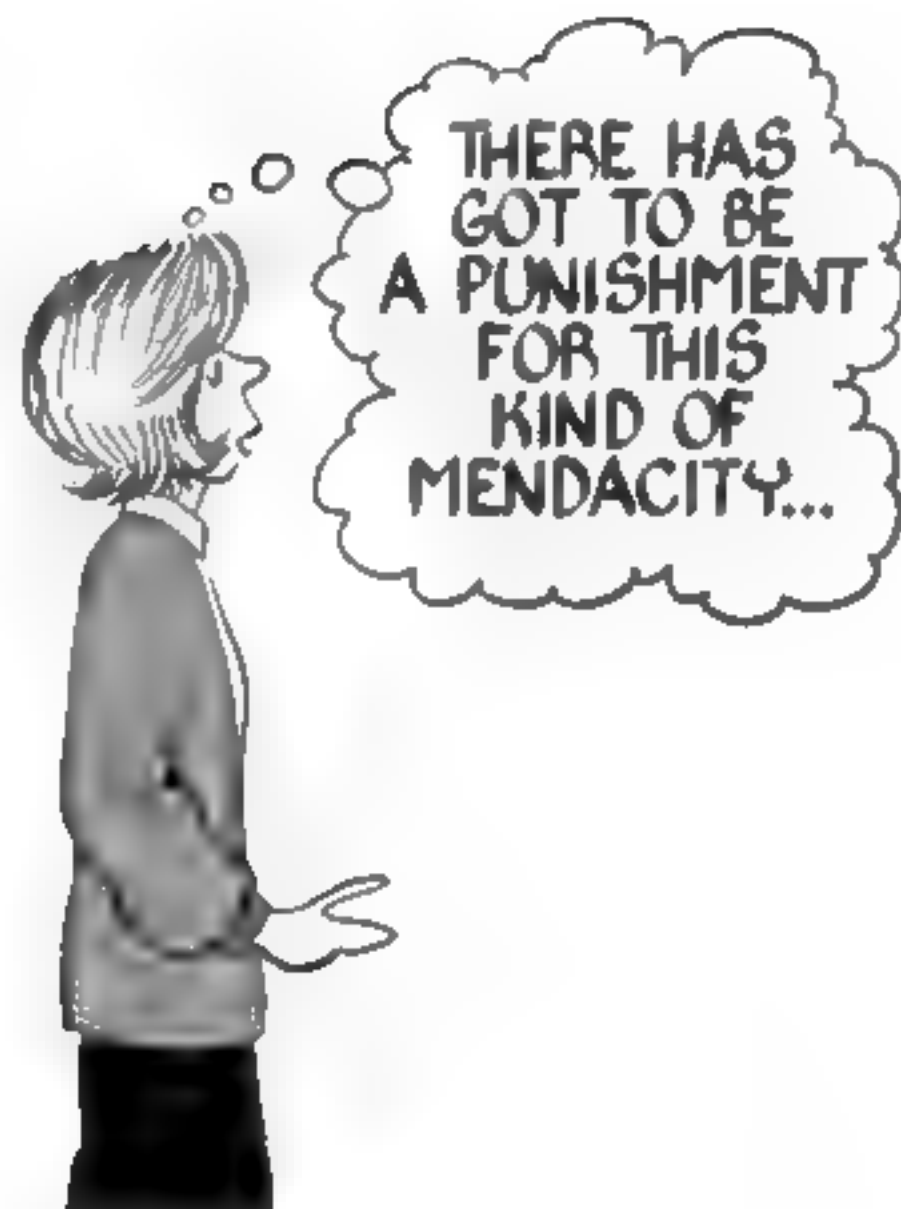
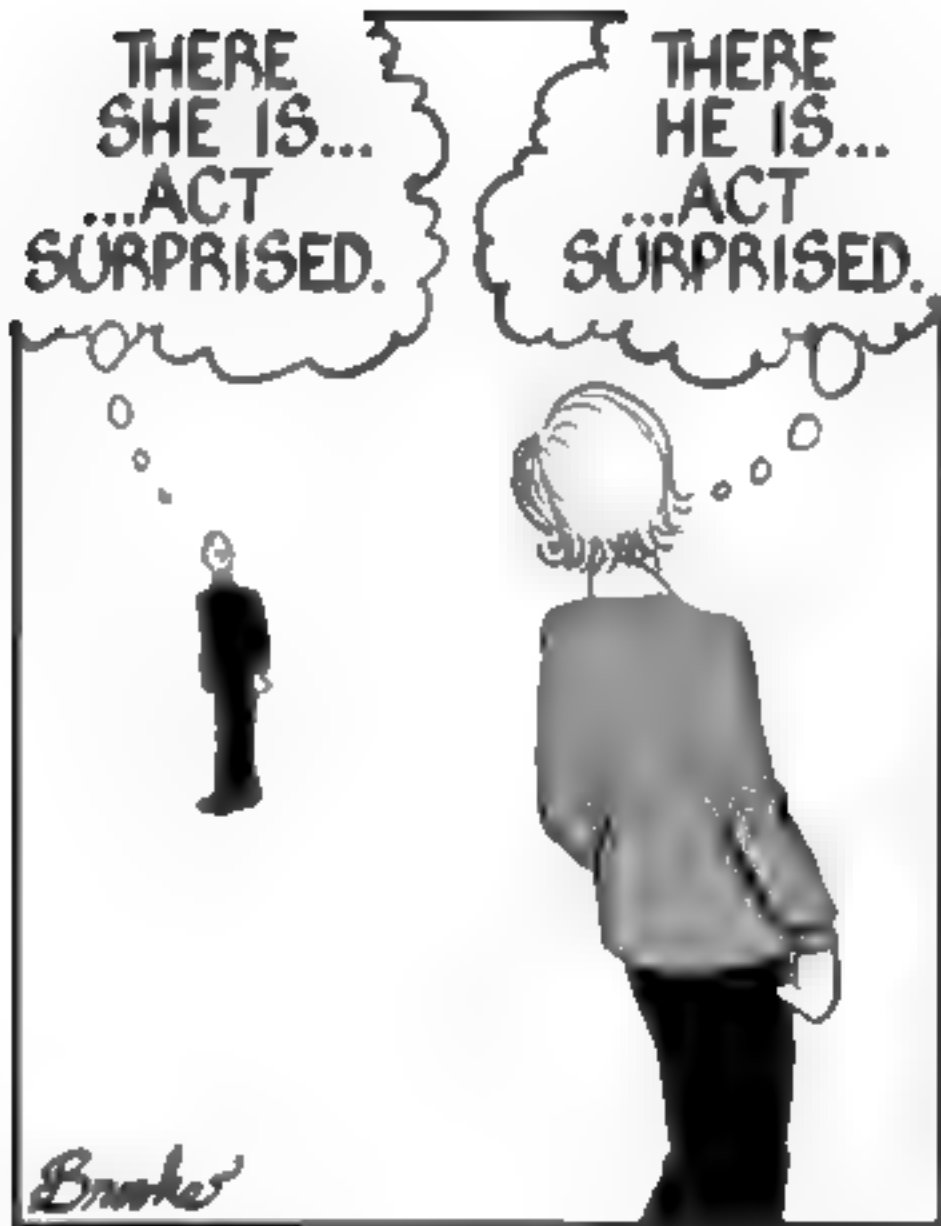


WHAT DID SHE PLAY?

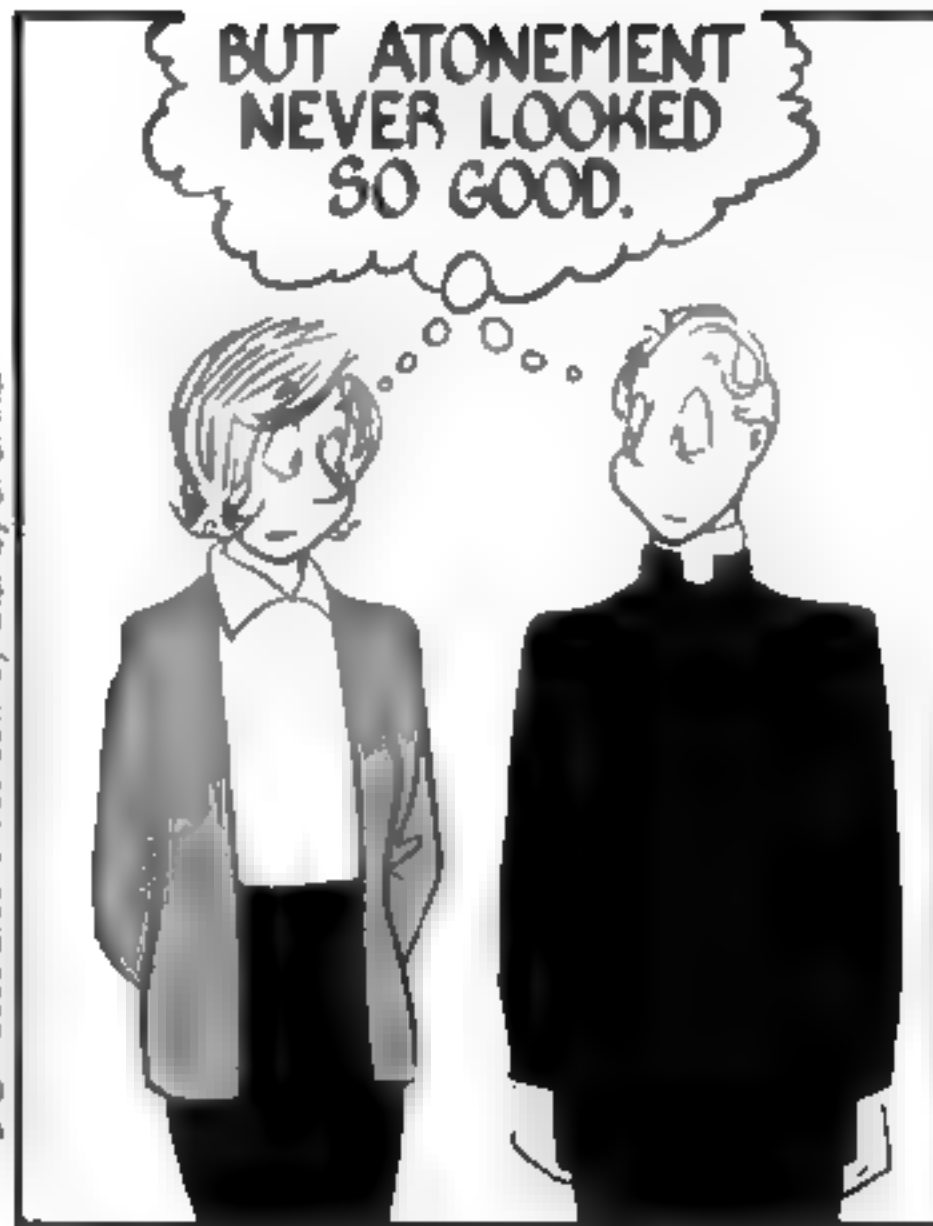
I DON'T REMEMBER.

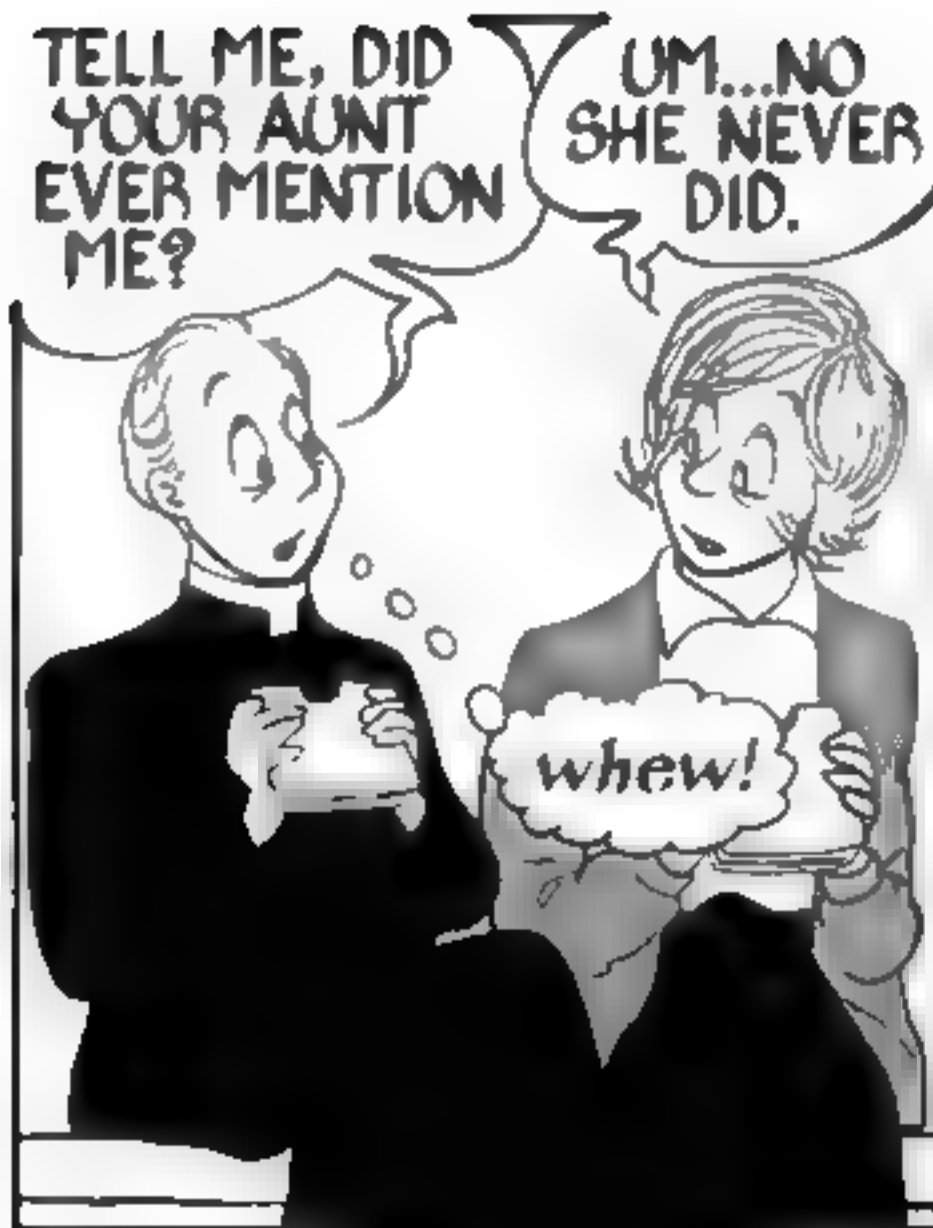
THAT'S WHY I HATE THAT DRESS.



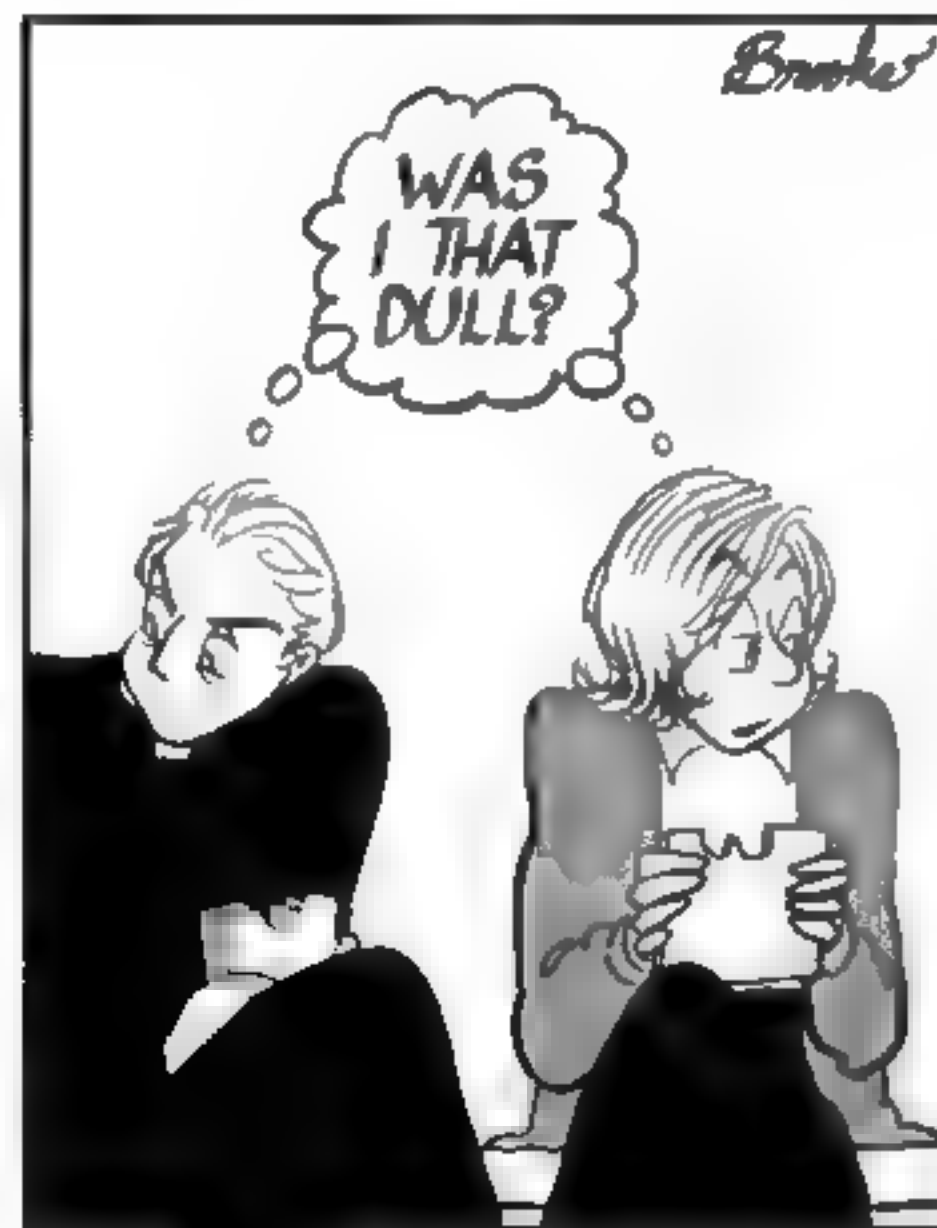


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5 9 K.P. Groulx McFidowney Dist by UFS, Inc



*Dear Thorax, I have fallen in love with a man whom I greatly respect. I cannot tell him because I might undermine his pledge to another. I wish I could forget him. Is there anything you might suggest?*  
Torn in  
New York



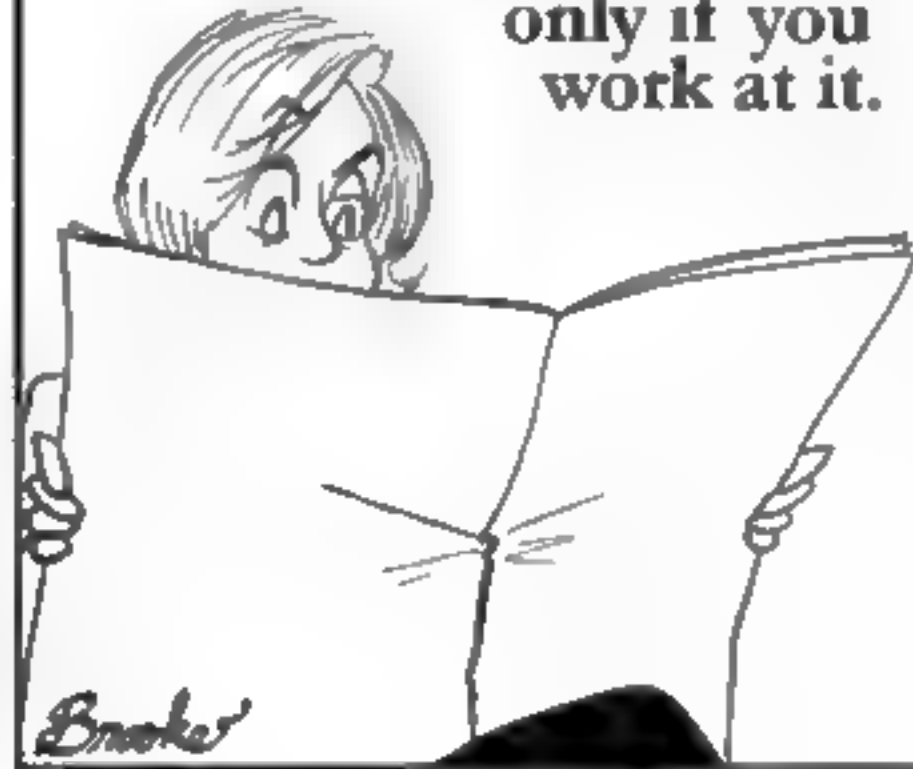
Dear Torn,  
This is always the problem with falling in love – the looming threat that it will be accompanied by honor, respect, self-sacrifice...even the blight of happy children.



With people like you cluttering up the world, we would have no operas, no novels, no sermons, no sitcoms. The Earth would be a desiccated, barren rock...



...devoid of foibles to entertain us, commandments to disobey. Get with the program. Love can be sordid only if you work at it.



Dear Thorax,  
I am married to my work, so to speak, but find  
myself falling deeply in love. I will not allow this  
to corrupt my mission in life, but I do not wish to  
hurt the object of my love. What should I do?  
Spoken For in N.Y.C.



Dear Spoken For:  
You clearly are a man of principle and  
conscience. In time you will do the right  
and honorable thing, and become utterly  
devoid of interest to all living beings.  
Bug off!



*Brooke*



Dear Thorax,  
Recently I married a woman whom  
for many years I've been in love with.  
Every day now is replete with a  
passion and happiness I cannot  
help but look forward to.  
Every night is pure rapture  
nothing else can compare  
with. Have I any right, in  
such a world as this, to live  
with a woman I feel such  
insatiable ardor for?

- Overawed in N.H.



Dear Overawed,  
If you end another sentence  
with a preposition, I'll kill  
you with my bare hands.

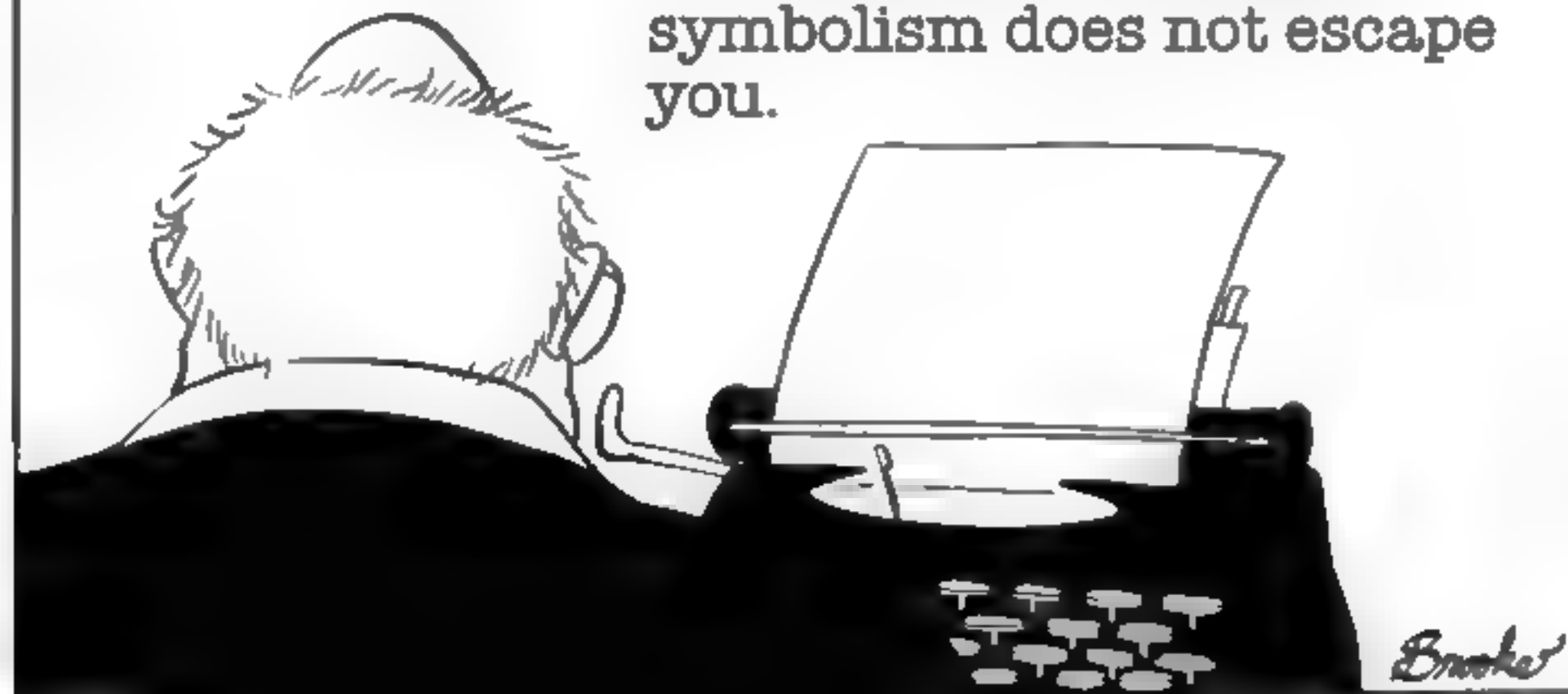


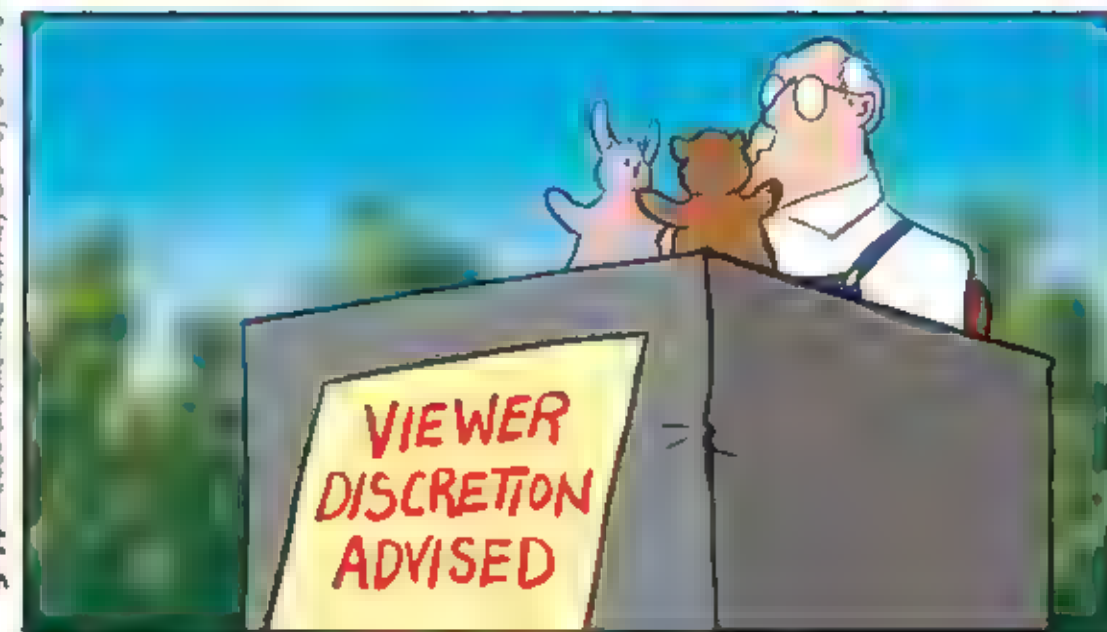
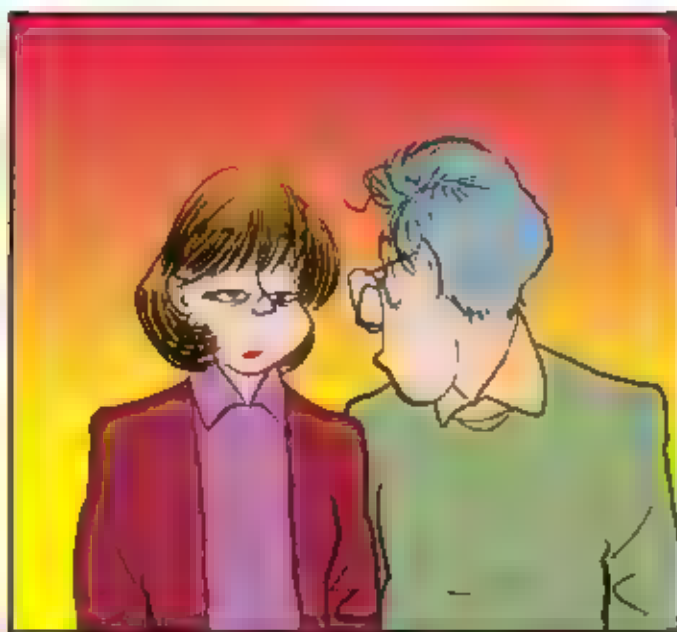
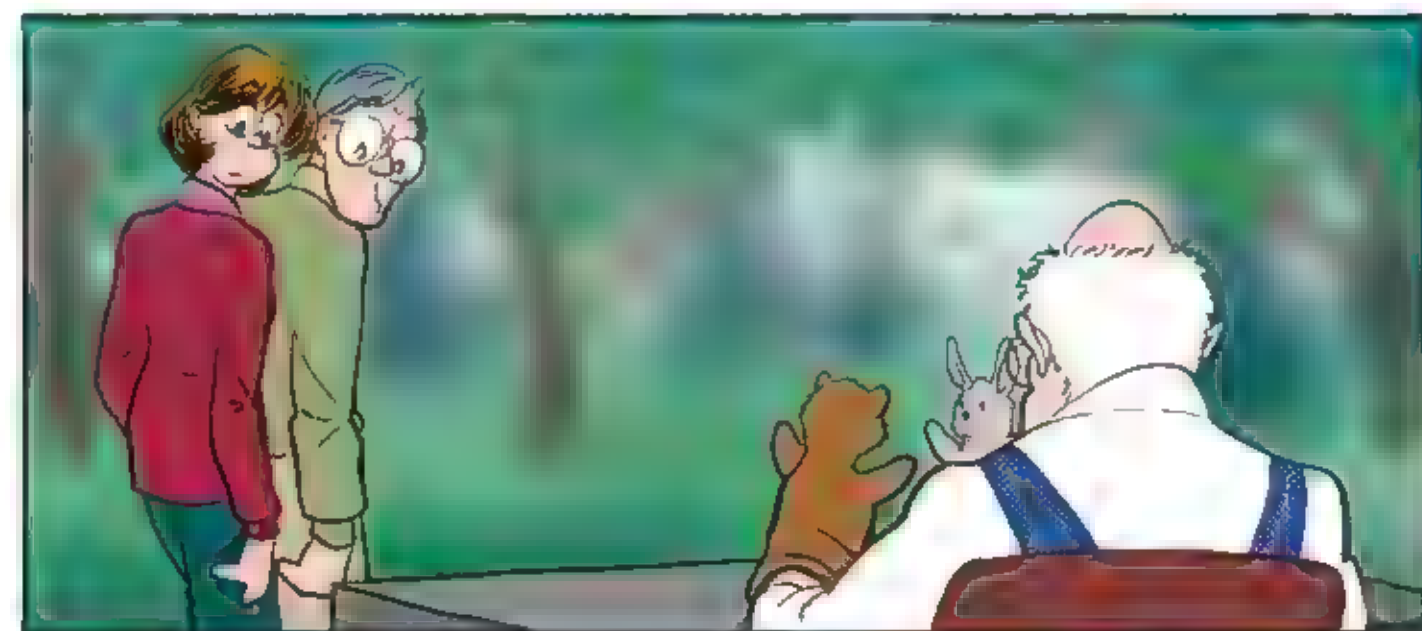
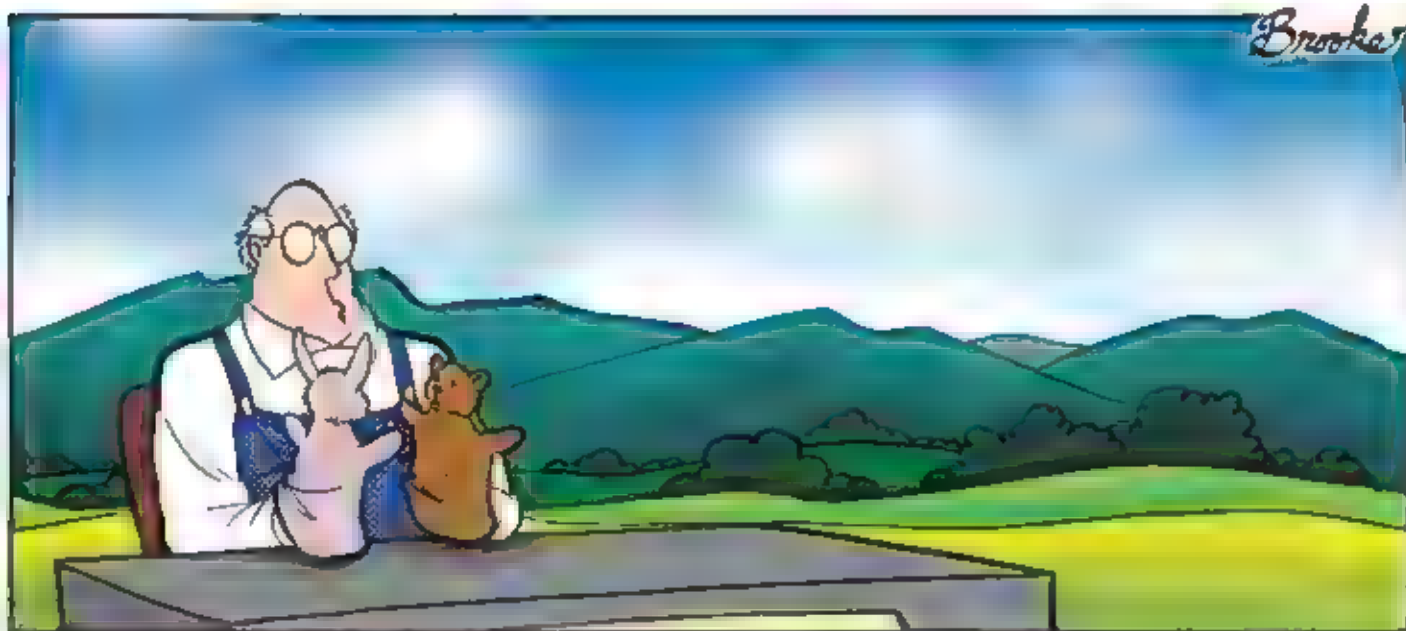
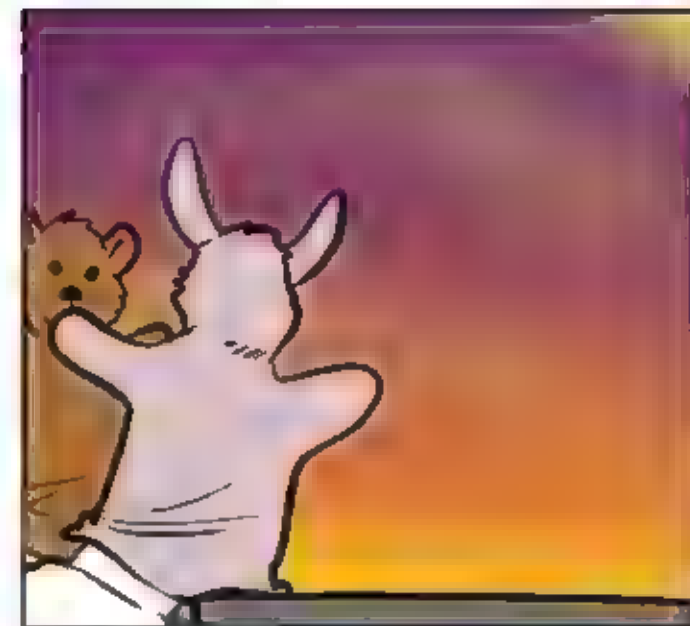
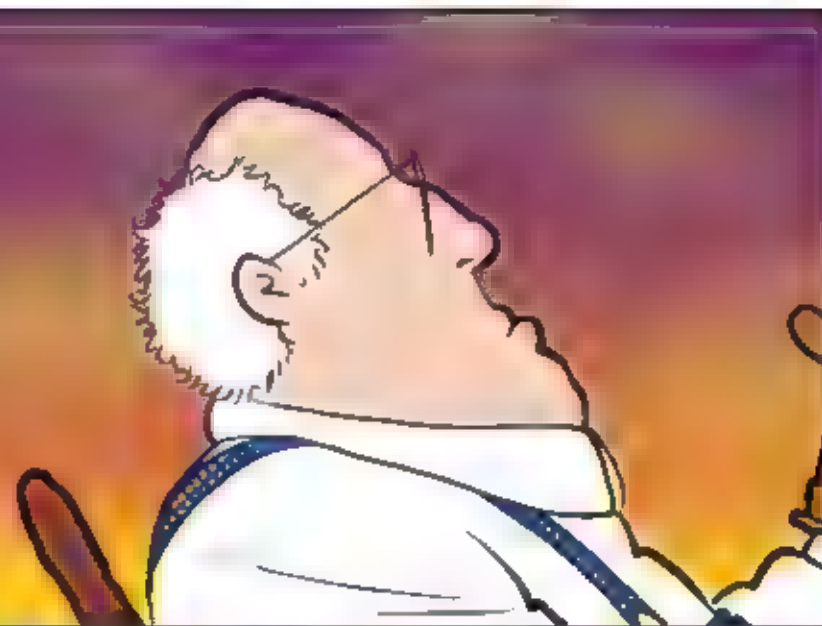
*Brooke*

*Dear Thorax,  
Recently I married my sweetheart of many  
years. The only regret I harbor lies in  
having waited so long to realize  
the love and happiness  
that...*



Dear Name Illegible,  
A bird just defecated on  
your note, obscuring the  
last sentence. I trust the  
symbolism does not escape  
you.





Dear Thorax,  
Several years ago I met a man and fell in love  
with him, which I kept secret. We ran into each  
other recently, at which time I led him to  
believe I am the niece of the woman he met  
back then. I think he may now be  
displaying affection for me  
rather than my "aunt," which  
makes me jealous of myself,  
angry at him and ashamed  
of my own duplicity.  
What should I do?

Split Personality  
in NYC



Dear Split,  
You comprise an appalling mixed  
assortment of neurotic compulsions,  
suppressed desires, denial and guilt.  
You are beyond any help the psychiatric  
profession could offer, and of enormous  
entertainment potential.

Keep writing.



*Brooks*



Dear Thorax,  
I am the headmistress of a Catholic School.  
One of my staff recently resigned from the order  
for reasons she would not  
disclose. I am wondering  
how to proceed. I suspect  
her motives were shocking  
and scandalous.

Headmistress in N. H.



Dear Nosy,  
I hope so. I am first and foremost  
a journalist. If you are wrong,  
I have just wasted valuable  
newspaper space on  
the sane and  
reasonable.

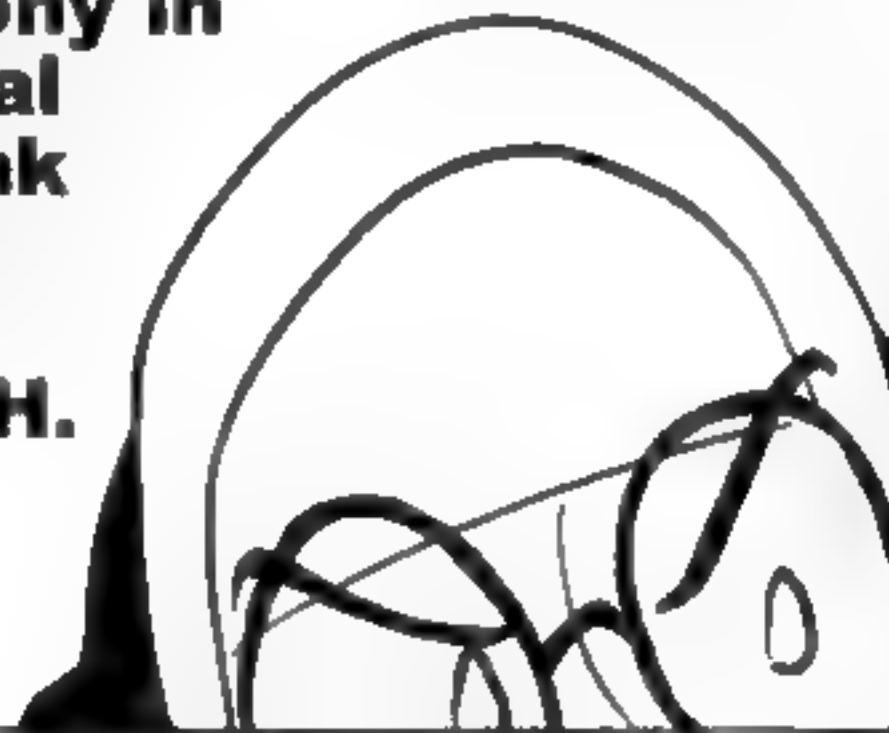


Brooke

**Dear Thorax,  
I am the Catholic school headmistress  
who wrote to you of recent date on a  
matter of deep concern. You responded  
with what may be called manifest irony.  
I do not approve of irony in  
these halls. My normal  
urge would be to spank  
the back of your hand  
with a ruler.**

**Headmistress in N.H.**

*Brooks*



Dear Attila,  
Try and find me.  
....Nyah.



Dear Thorax,  
A man dressed like Flash Gordon  
pinched me in the vegetable  
section of my local grocery  
last evening, in full view of  
the asparagus. I was speechless  
with astonishment. What action  
should I take?

Granny in N.H.



*Brooke*

Dear Granite State Granny,  
Loiter in front of the avocados  
tonight. I will be attired  
as Zorro.



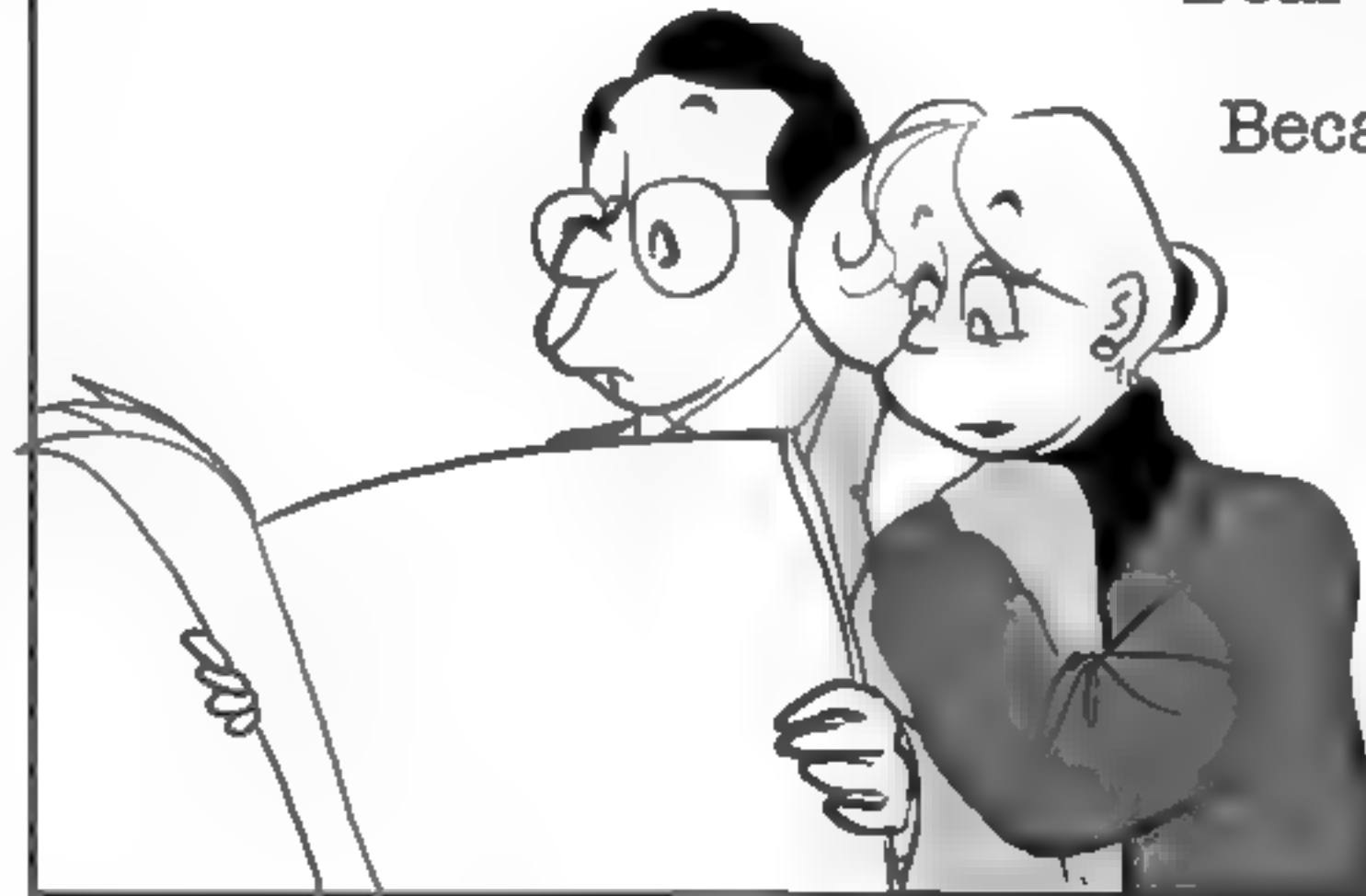
Brooke

Dear Thorax,  
Why?

A Cellist  
in Gotham



Dear Cellist,  
Because.





*Dear Thoraco,*

*I love a cellist who does not respond to my advances.  
He is besotted with a skinny little vole of a dancer  
instead. I am exoruciatingly sexy, my perfumed  
body is to die for, my voice dark, my accent  
alluringly foreign, my couture heart-  
stopping. What am I doing wrong?  
Well-Turned Ankle  
in New York City*

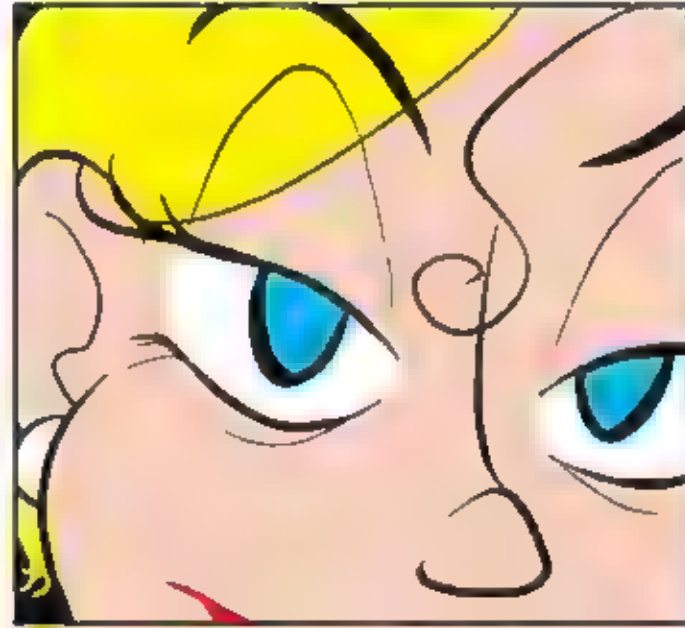
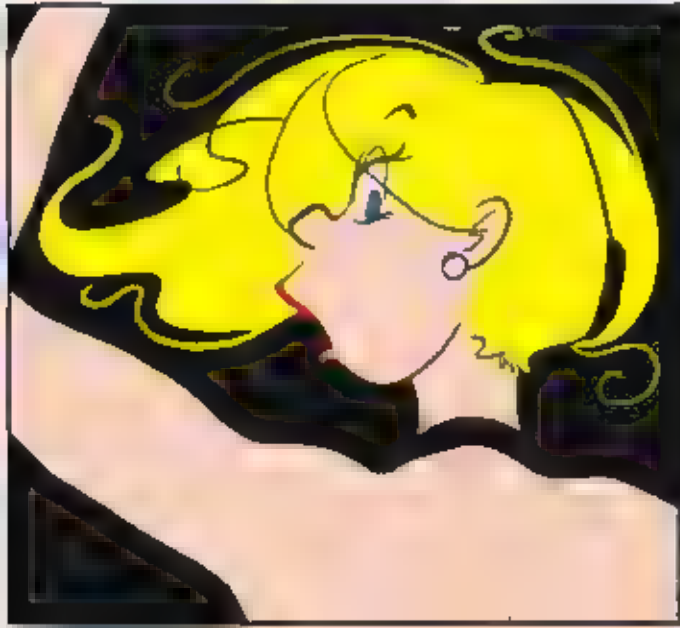
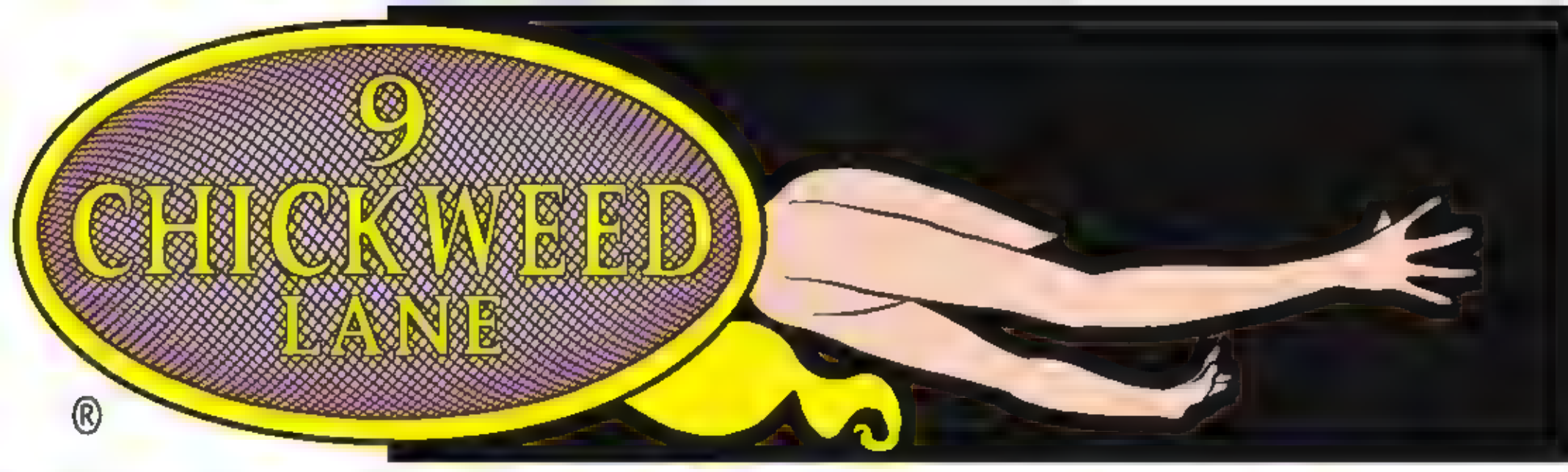


Dear Well-Turned,  
My tongue is getting  
tangled in the carriage  
of my Royal. I can't  
move

te  
gh b g m  
...G D H P M!!!

*Brooke*





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IF YOUR AUNT DIDN'T MENTION ME, DID SHE REFER TO A PRIEST SHE MET AT HER SCHOOL LAST YEAR? A BISHOP'S SECRETARY?

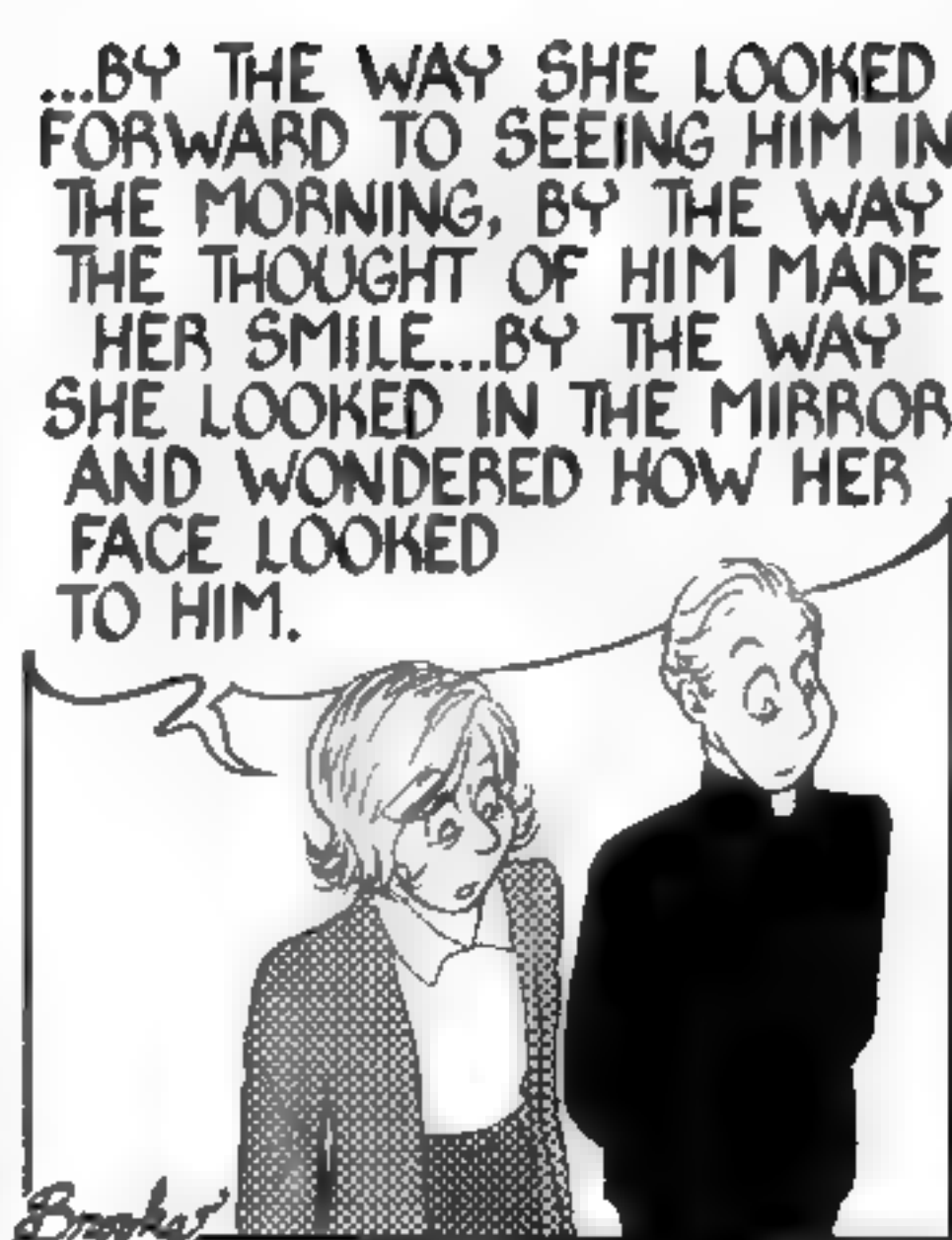
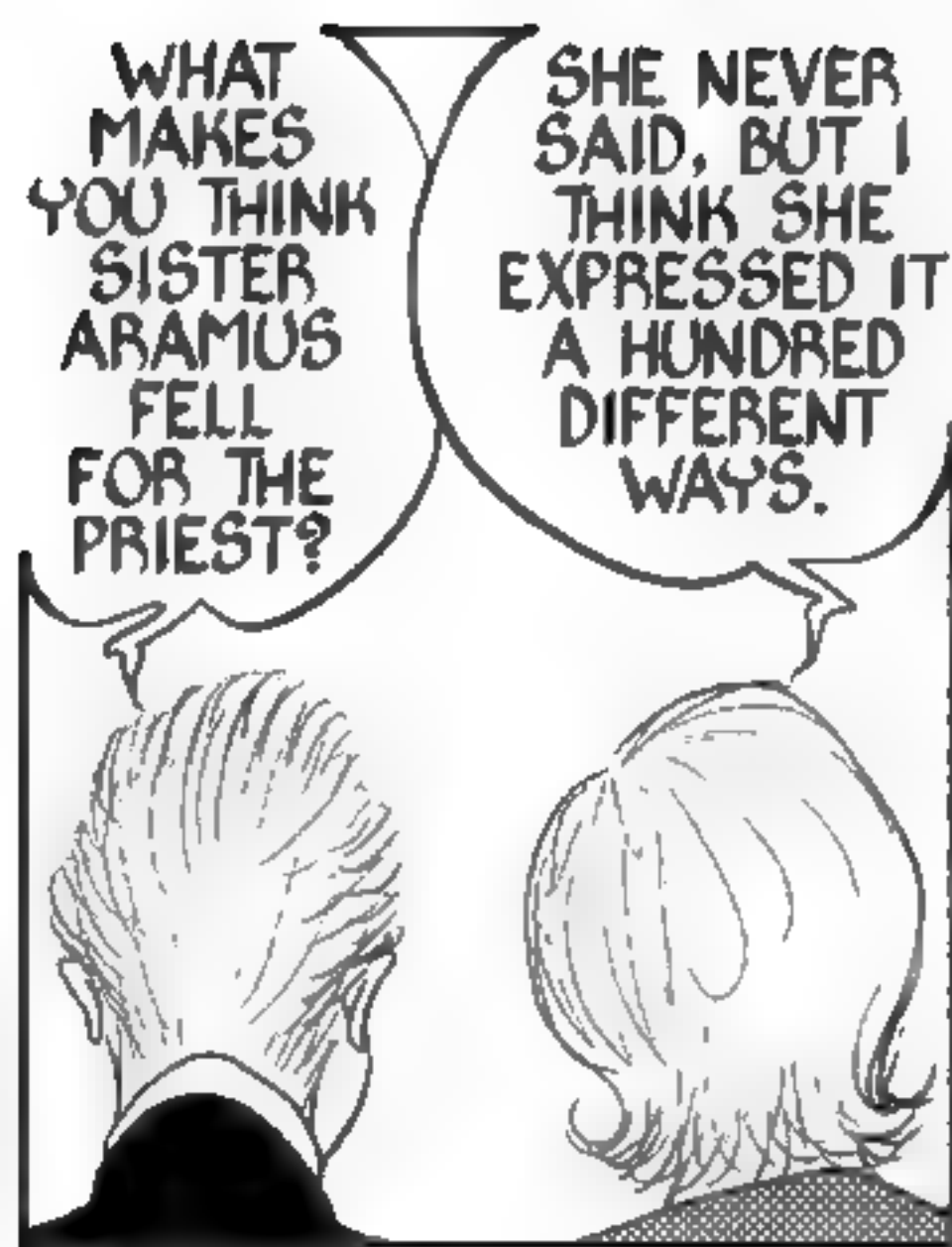
YES, BUT SHE GAVE NO SPECIFICS.

FROM WHAT SHE WROTE, I BELIEVE SHE LIKED HIM...  
...BUT THAT WOULD BE READING BETWEEN THE LINES. I GATHER SHE THOUGHT HE WAS KIND AND SWEET AND CHARMING...  
...BUT AGAIN, THAT'S READING BETWEEN THE LINES.

I THINK SHE MAY EVEN HAVE...WELL...  
...FALLEN FOR HIM A LITTLE.

BUT THAT'S READING BETWEEN THE LINES?

SISTER ARAMUS KEPT MOST OF HER FEELINGS BETWEEN THE LINES.  
...AND IT WAS GETTING PRETTY CROWDED THERE.





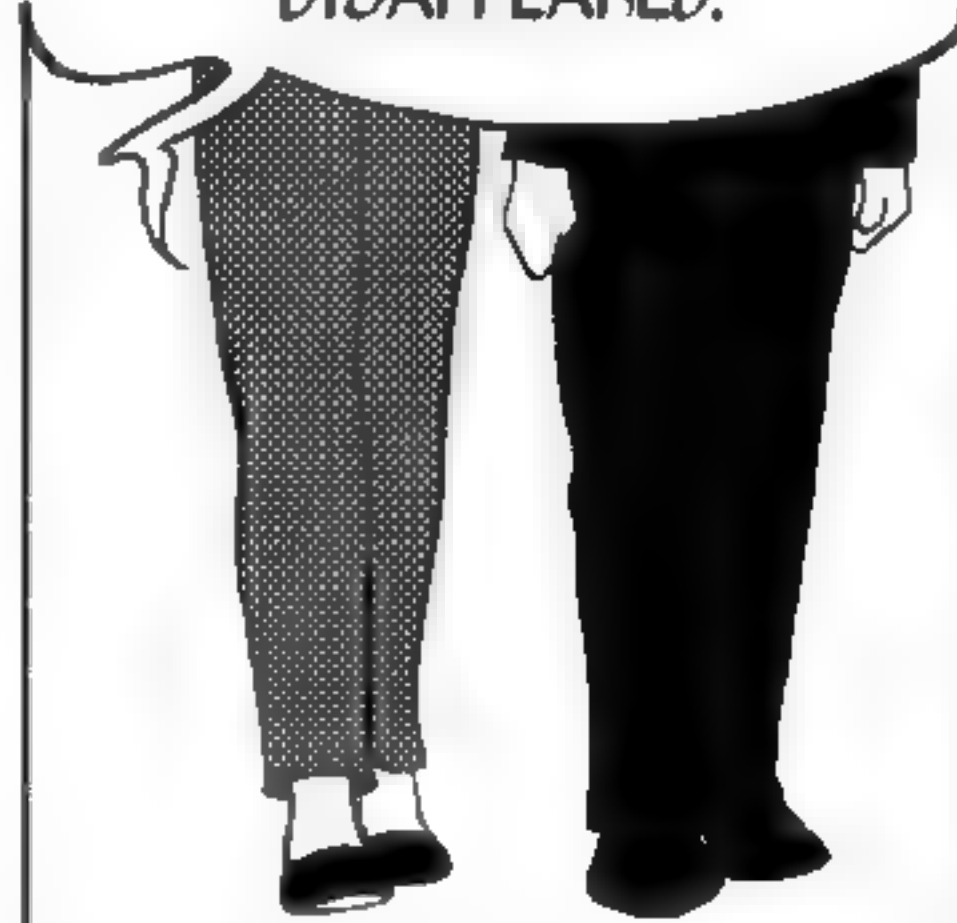
AFTER THE PRIEST LEFT,  
SHE NEVER MENTIONED  
HIM AGAIN.



"SHE NEVER TOLD HER LOVE,  
BUT LET CONCEALMENT,  
LIKE A WORM I' THE BUD,  
FEED ON HER DAMASK  
CHEEK: SHE PIN'D IN  
THOUGHT; AND WITH A  
GREEN AND YELLOW  
MELANCHOLY, SHE SAT  
LIKE PATIENCE ON A  
MONUMENT,  
SMILING AT  
GRIEF."



EVENTUALLY, SHE  
QUIETLY RESIGNED AND  
DISAPPEARED.



*Brooke*

I GATHER  
SHE TAUGHT  
SHAKESPEARE.



NOT AS  
MUCH AS  
SHAKESPEARE  
TAUGHT HER.



Dear Thorax,  
I resigned my order because  
of an intense, spiritual but  
very secular love, and I've  
lived in private contemplation  
ever since. I feel that, in time,  
I can beat this thing and be  
happy. Am I following the  
right road?

In retreat in NYC



Dear Retreat,  
Emerge!  
Take life by the throat!  
Cloistered people are  
expected to exist in  
self-imposed,  
contemplative denial.  
But that's no way  
to treat a laity.



*Brooke*

Dear Thorax,  
I read with some dismay  
your recent advice to a  
former nun to quit her  
self-imposed contemplation  
and "take life by the throat!"  
As a priest, I have to say  
I found your admonition  
glib and ill-considered.  
This woman needs the  
reflection that only time  
and solitude will provide.  
Yours sincerely,  
Cleric in NYC



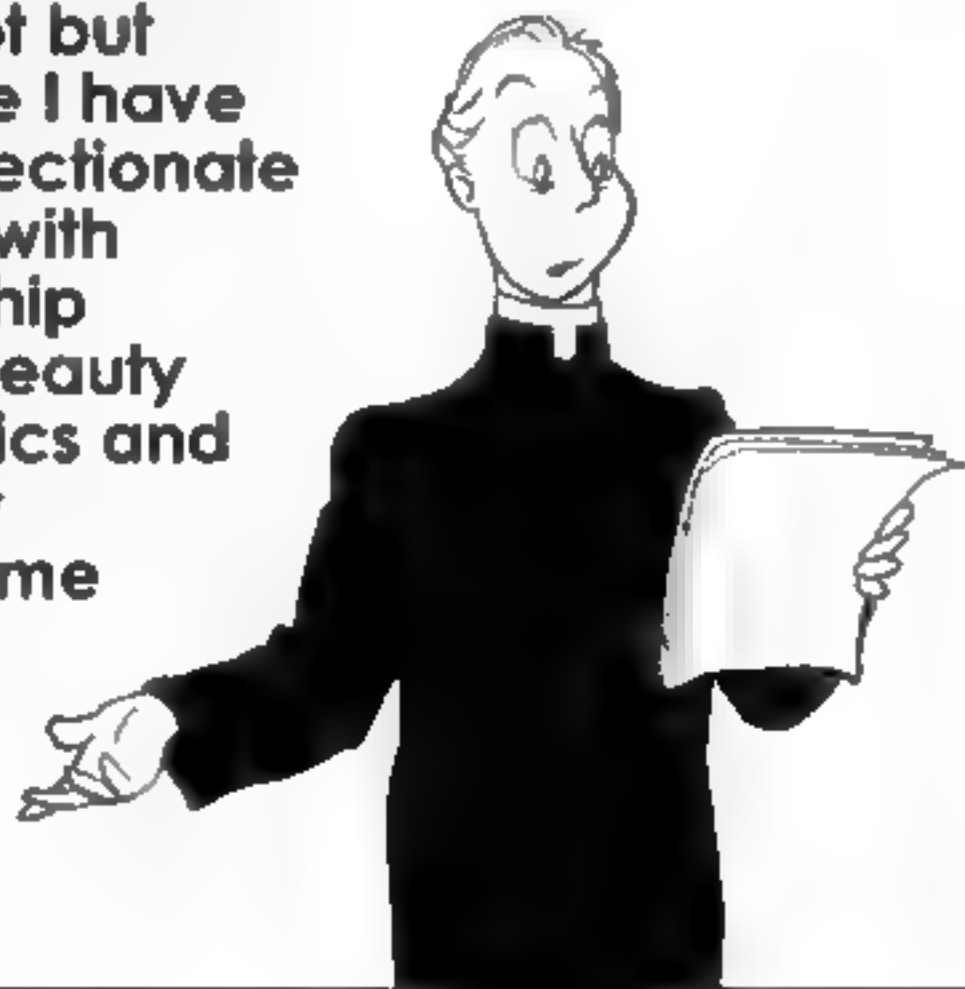
Dear Cleric,

I thought I told you  
to bug off!



*Brooke*

Dear Thorax,  
I am a man who has taken  
a vow of celibacy. I consider this  
not only a moral precept but  
an issue of honor. Of late I have  
been developing an affectionate  
and caring relationship with  
a woman whose friendship  
buoys me, and whose beauty  
I cannot ignore. My ethics and  
principles, as well as my  
respect for her, prevent me  
from acting on any  
impulse other than the  
most honorable. For  
was it not St. Thomas  
Aquinas who said...



*Brooke*

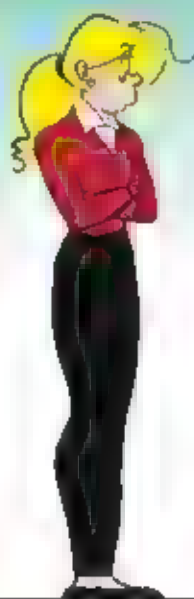
I'm sorry...  
.....what?







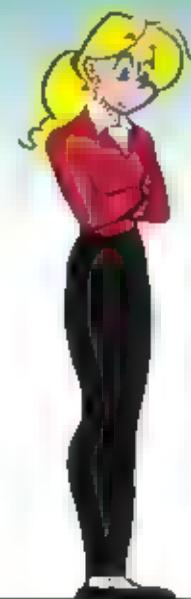
HALLMARKS  
OF FELINITY



HI, SOLANGE.



SOLANGE?



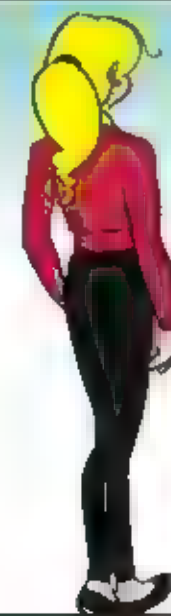
HELLO,  
SOLANGE.



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AS  
A MATTER OF  
PREARRANGEMENT,  
CATS POSSESS  
NAMES.  
BUT DO NOT  
ANSWER  
TO THEM.



Brooke

AS MUCH AS I ADMIRE IT,  
YOUR REPUBLIC HAS A  
GREAT DEAL TO LEARN IN  
CHOOSING ITS ELECTED  
OFFICIALS.



THE SUPREME PRESIDENT OF  
MY WORLD, FOR INSTANCE,  
HAS OCCUPIED HIS POST AS  
LONG AS ANYONE CAN  
RECALL, SO PLEASED  
IS THE ELECTORATE  
WITH HIM.



WHAT,  
DARE  
I ASK,  
GIVES A  
LEADER  
SUCH  
STAYING  
POWER?

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT  
HIM THAT JUST ENGENDERS  
TRUST. PERHAPS IT IS THE  
CLARITY OF HIS GAZE,  
HIS BEARING, HIS DIGNITY,  
THE WAY HE DELIBERATES  
WHEN WEIGHING ISSUES...



HOWEVER, I TEND TO THINK  
MUCH OF THE INCUMBENT'S  
SATISFACTION RATING CAN  
BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE  
OVERALL SKILL OF  
HIS TAXIDERMIST.



YOU SEEM MORE  
SETTLED INTO  
THIS BUSINESS  
OF BEING YOUR  
OWN NIECE.

AT FIRST IT WAS VERY  
AWKWARD...BUT AS  
TIME HAS PASSED I  
FIND I LIKE BEING  
NINE YEARS  
YOUNGER  
THAN  
SISTER  
ARAMUS.

SISTER  
ARAMUS HAS  
ALL THESE  
CONCERNS ABOUT  
HER FEELINGS FOR  
FATHER DURLY THAT  
DIANE DOESN'T  
GIVE A SECOND  
THOUGHT.

AND DIANE HAS LOST  
TEN POUNDS AND  
LOOKS GREAT IN  
A SUMMER  
WARDROBE.

DIANE TENDS TO  
GIGGLE A LOT TOO.

YOU  
HAVE  
NO IDEA  
THE  
BACKLOG  
THAT HAS  
ACCUMULATED  
AFTER  
14 YEARS  
OF BEING  
SISTER  
ARAMUS.

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Brooke

SO, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S  
GOING TO GET  
HARDER TO TELL  
FATHER DURLY  
THE LONGER  
YOU  
WAIT?

TELL HIM?  
TELL HIM  
WHAT?



YOU KNOW...THAT YOU'RE  
SISTER ARAMUS.

I'M NOT SISTER  
ARAMUS...SHE SPLIT,  
MADE TRACKS, TOOK  
A POWDER.



SHE'S OFF SOMEWHERE  
CONTEMPLATING HER NAVEL,  
GATHERING DUST, HANGING  
IN THE CLOSET, OUT TO  
PASTURE...

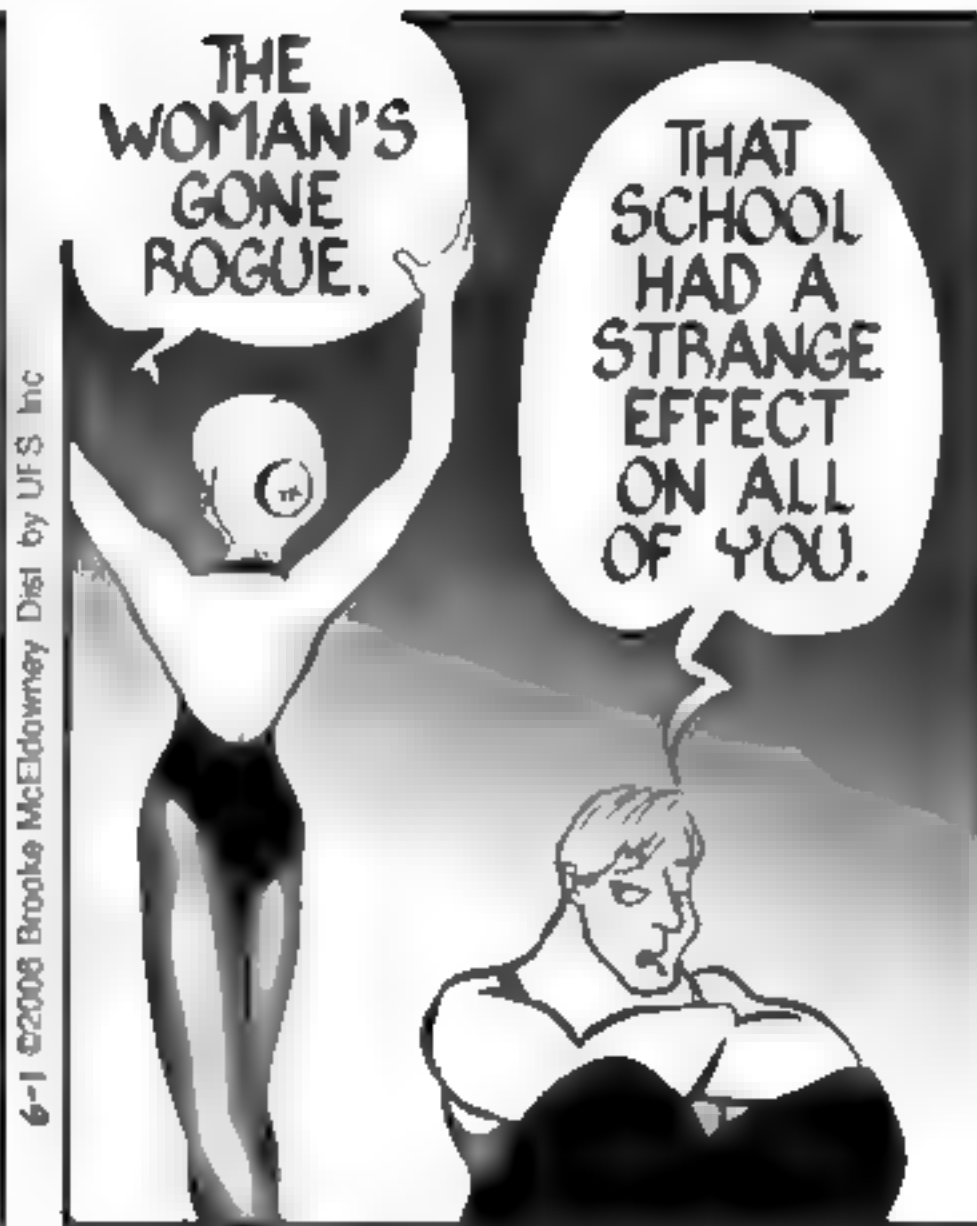


WELCOME TO ANOTHER  
EXCITING EPISODE OF  
"MINING FOR  
METAPHORS."

...ON THE  
SHELF,  
IN COLD  
STORAGE...







Brooke



I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN.  
...IT IS HARD TO RESPECT  
A MAN AND CHEW ON HIS  
EAR SIMULTANEOUSLY.



I STILL MARVEL AT YOUR  
ABILITY TO BE VULGAR AND  
EMPLOY SIX-SYLLABLE  
ADVERBS IN THE SAME  
SENTENCE.



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DIANE AND I WERE DEBATING  
LOVE AND RESPECT...MY  
THESIS BEING THAT THE  
DEMONSTRATION OF ONE  
TENDS TO CROWD OUT  
THE OTHER.

OH, I  
DISAGREE.



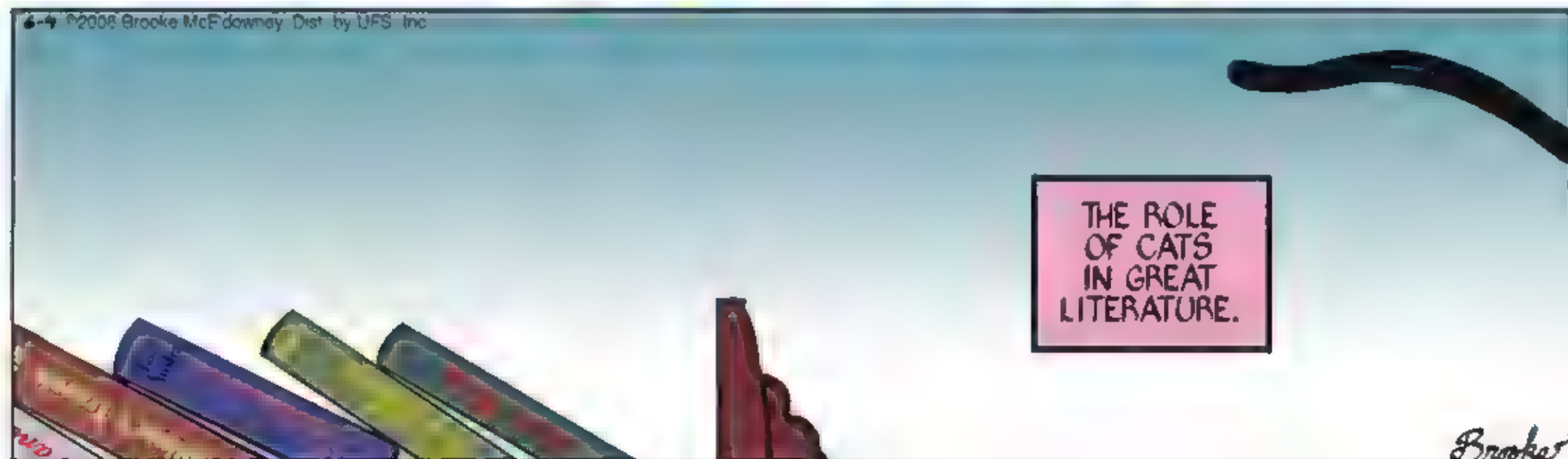
AND I NEVER FOR AN  
INSTANT LOST MY GREATER  
REGARD FOR YOU AS  
A HUMAN BEING.

SHUT UP  
AND RESPECT  
ME SOME  
MORE.



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Brooke



THE ROLE  
OF CATS  
IN GREAT  
LITERATURE.

Brooker





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WHEN I ASK IF YOU HEAR  
VOICES, MR. THORAX,  
I MEAN OTHER THAN OUR  
OWN. DO YOU HEAR  
ANY LIKE THAT?

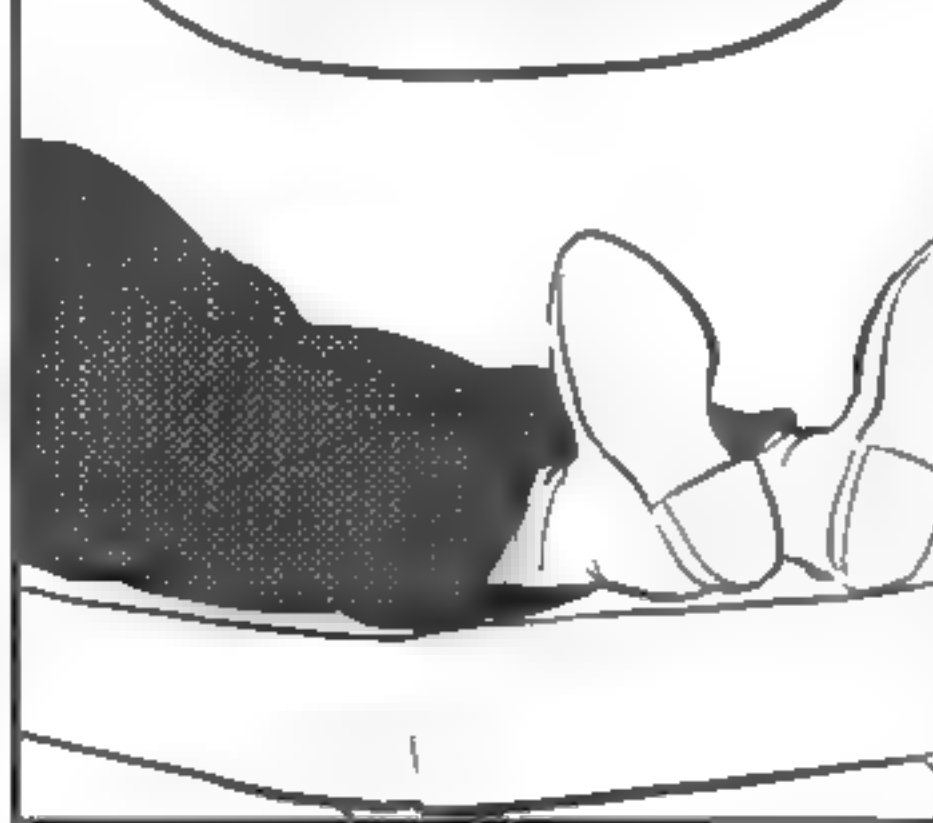


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YES...BUT INNER VOICES  
ARE NOT UNUSUAL FOR  
PEOPLE FROM MY WORLD.  
HOWEVER, I REFUSE  
TO LISTEN TO MINE.



AND WHY  
IS THAT?  
ARE YOU RESISTING  
ITS INFLUENCE?



NO.  
IT TALKS  
WITH ITS  
MOUTH  
FULL.



THE OTHER DAY, AFTER I  
PURCHASED THIS BLOUSE  
FROM YOU, YOU TOLD  
ME TO HAVE A  
NICE DAY.

YES,  
MA'AM?



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I JUST WANTED TO LET  
YOU KNOW, I DID NOT  
HAVE A NICE DAY...  
...DO YOU  
HEAR ME?  
...ARE WE  
CLEAR ON  
THIS?



EVER SINCE I QUIT MY JOB AT THE  
UNIVERSITY, I TAKE ORDERS  
FROM NOBODY.



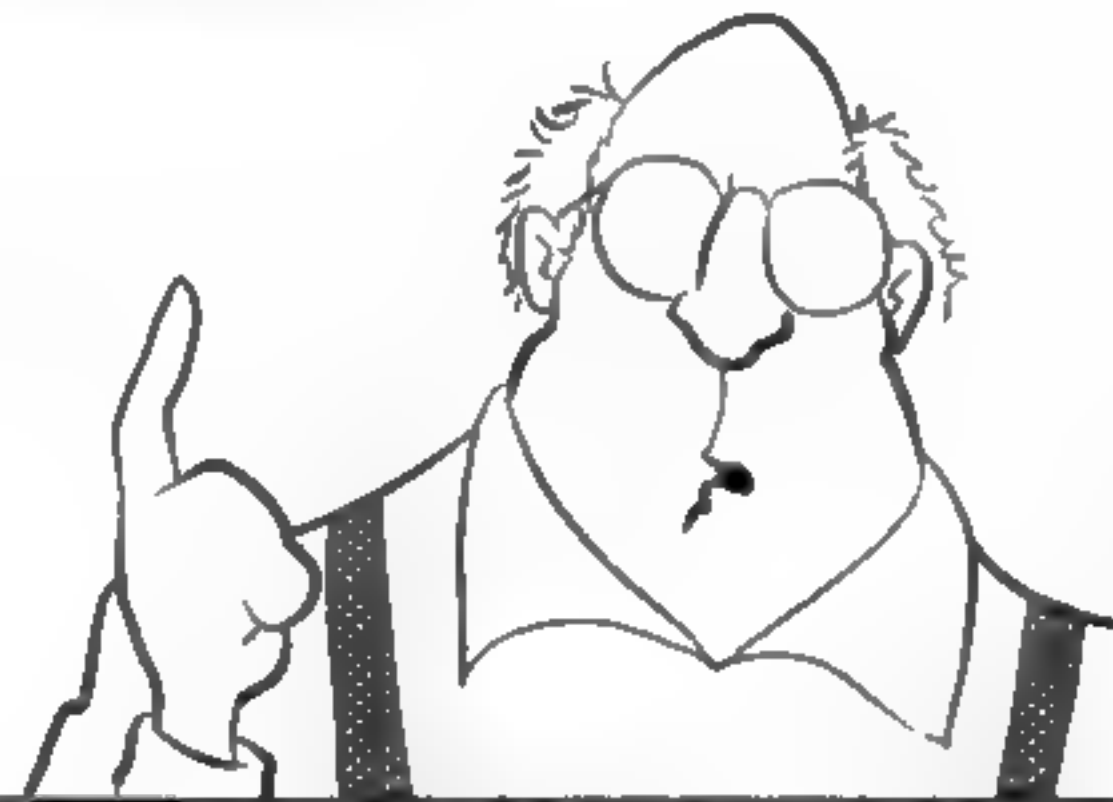
Brooke

MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



ONE OF MY BOYHOOD AMBITIONS  
WAS TO BECOME A GONDOLIER ON  
THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

*Brooke*



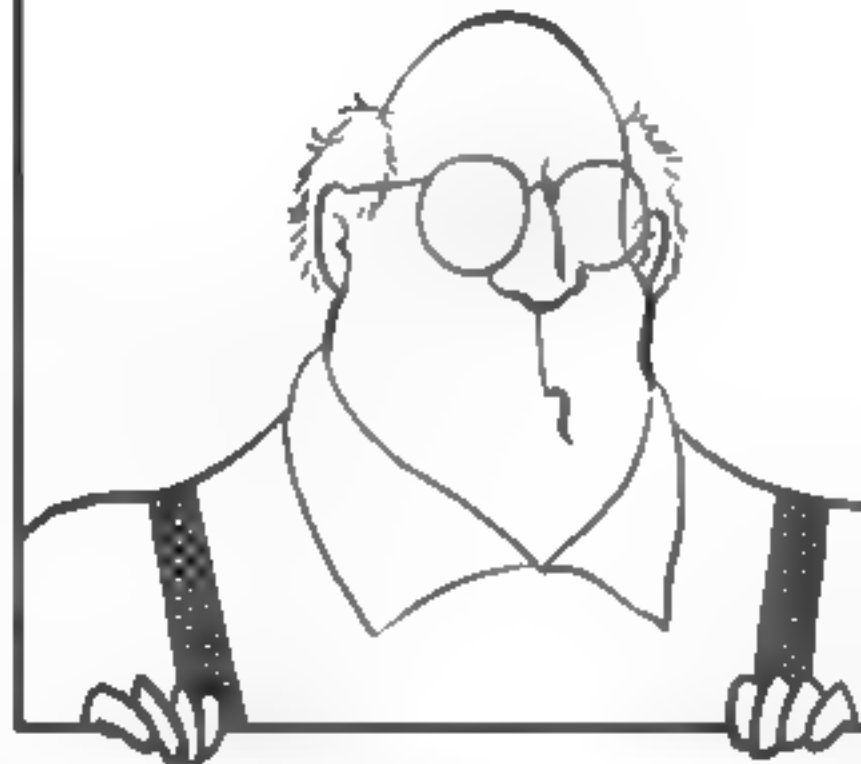


**MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX**



*Brooke*

PEOPLE OF RELIGIOUS  
DISTINCTION MAINTAIN  
THAT HUMAN BEINGS,  
EXCLUSIVE OF ALL OTHER  
CREATURES, POSSESS SOULS  
AND ARE, THEREFORE,  
ENTITLED TO ADMITTANCE  
INTO HEAVEN. HUMAN BEINGS  
ALONE LIE, LIBEL, SLANDER,  
DEVISE POGROMS, MURDER  
FOR RECREATION AND  
PERFORM CROSSWORD  
PUZZLES. THIS SAYS  
NOTHING NEW ABOUT THE  
HUMAN CONDITION, BUT IT  
ILLUMINATES WHAT A SOUL  
CONTRIBUTES TO IT.



IT ALSO  
CLARIFIES THE ENTRANCE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR  
HEAVEN.

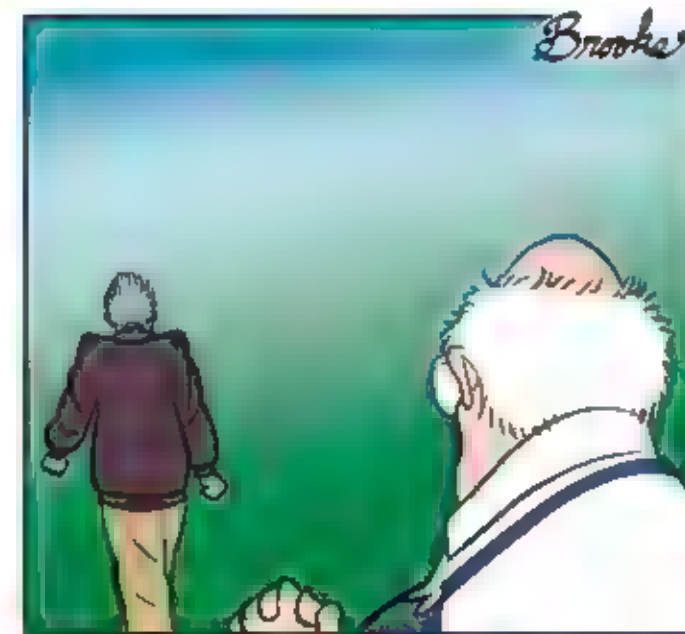
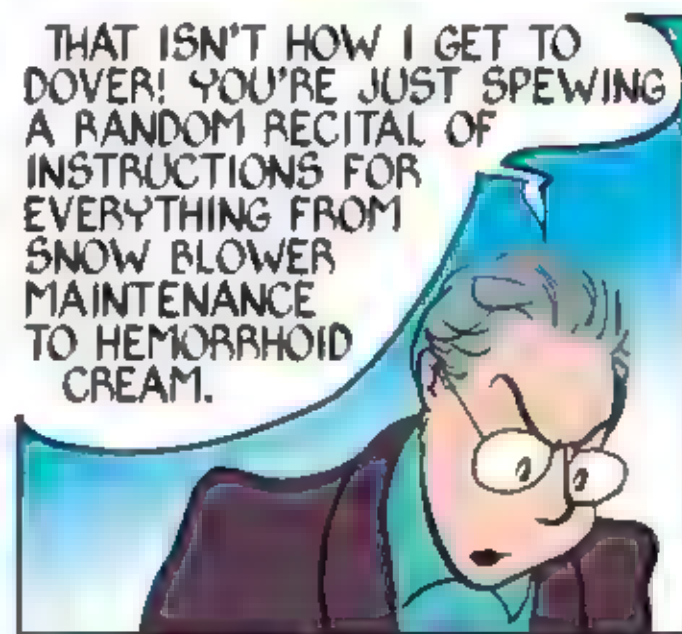
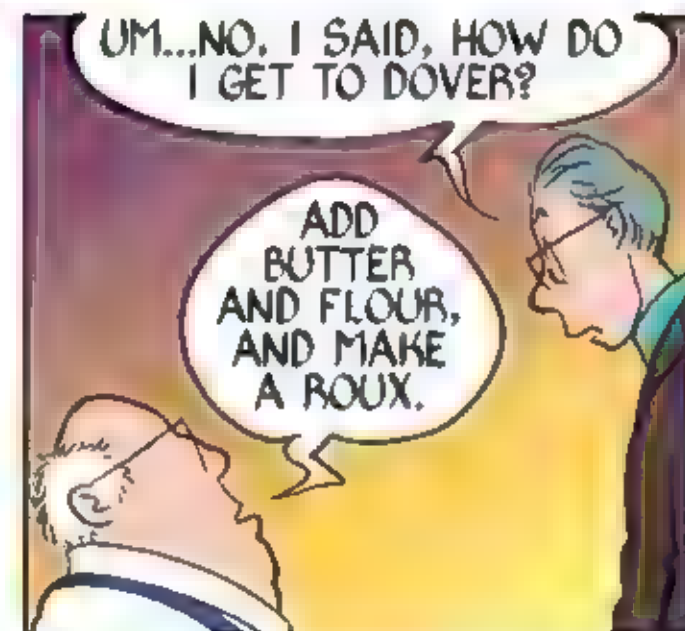
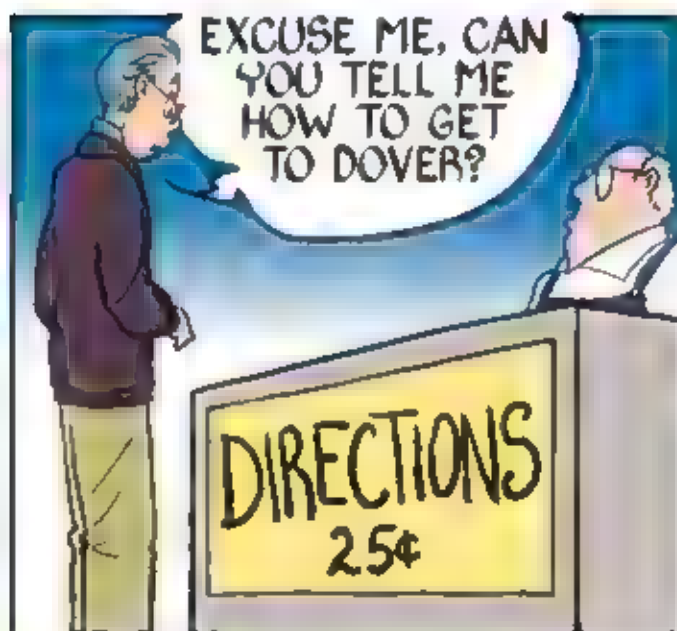
MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX

Brooke



UNREQUITED  
HUMAN ATTEMPTS TO  
COMMUNICATE WITH  
EXTRATERRESTRIAL  
BEINGS TESTIFY TO  
THE CERTAINTY OF  
INTELLIGENT LIFE  
IN THE UNIVERSE.  
NOTHING COULD BE  
MORE INTELLIGENT  
THAN A REFUSAL  
TO RETURN THE  
CALL.





Dear Thorax,  
My grandmother disap-  
proves of my roommate  
and his friend. Is there  
anything I can do to  
reconcile her to my living  
arrangement  
and keep  
the peace?  
Perplexed  
in NYC



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Dear Perplexed,  
Your grandmother  
is a control shark.  
She attracts her prey  
by withholding  
approval. Any effort  
to appease is like blood  
in the water.  
Stay out of it.  
Common  
interests  
will draw  
combatants  
together.



SO, TELL US MORE ABOUT  
YOU AND PATTON'S THIRD  
ARMY...AND DON'T LEAVE  
ANYTHING OUT.

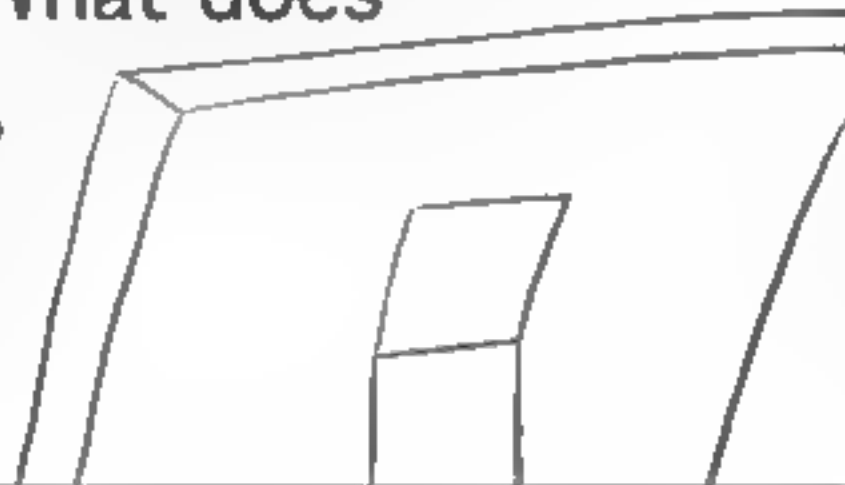
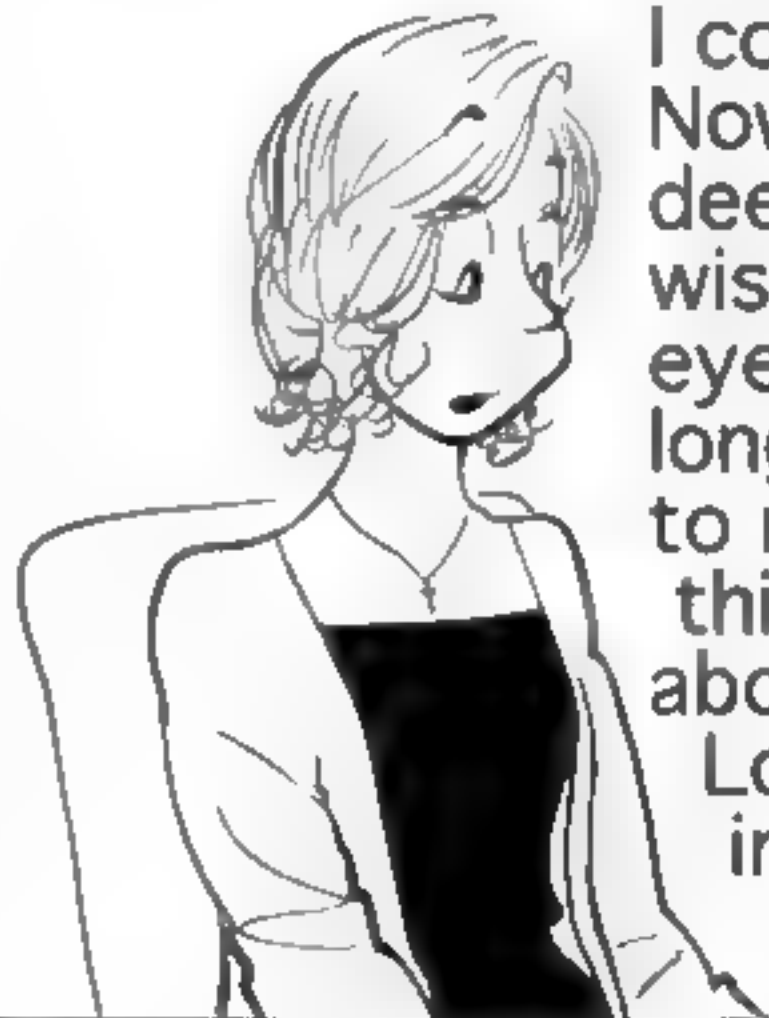


*Brooke*



Dear Thorax,

I quit my order and left behind  
a cloistered life all because  
I could not live in hypocrisy.  
Now I daily deceive a man I  
deeply admire, with the dearest  
wish that he might turn a blind  
eye to his own convictions just  
long enough to touch his lips  
to mine. What does  
this say  
about me?  
Lovelorn  
in NYC



*Brooke*

Dear Lovelorn,

You're an optimist.



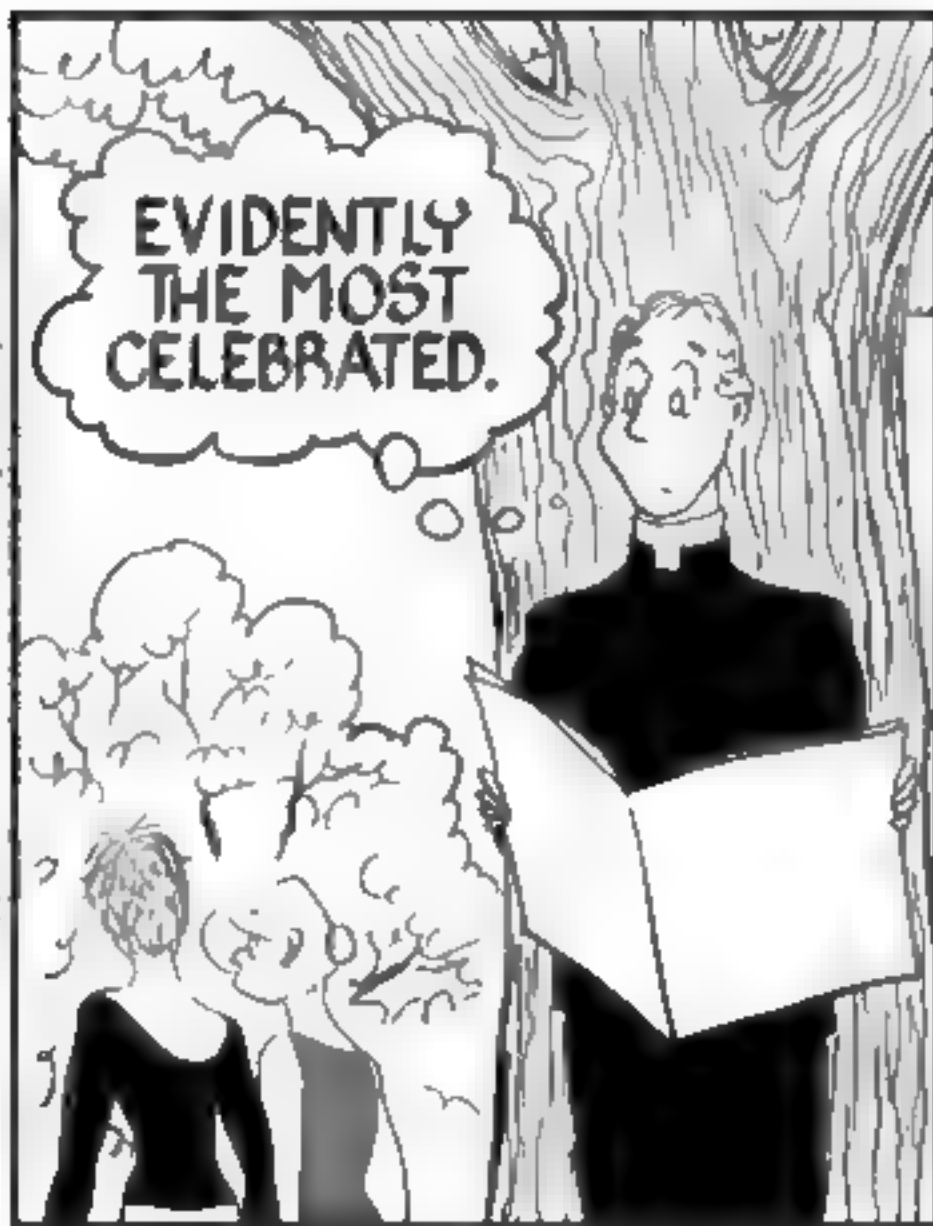
SO, BASICALLY,  
MY OLD ENGLISH  
TEACHER HAS  
BEEN ALLOWING  
FATHER DURLY  
TO THINK  
SHE IS HER  
OWN NIECE  
DIANE FOR A  
COUPLE OF  
MONTHS.  
AND NOW  
SHE CAN'T  
FIGURE  
A WAY  
OUT OF  
IT.



YEAH,  
BUT WHO  
IS THIS GUY,  
ANYWAY?  
THE BIGGEST  
DOOFUS  
IN NEW  
YORK?



EVIDENTLY  
THE MOST  
CELEBRATED.



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DIANE'S ENMIRED IN QUICKSAND. SHE'S TOTALLY INFATUATED WITH FATHER DURLY.

WHAT IS THIS GUY?  
SOME KIND  
OF DISH?

WHAT IS  
THIS GUY?  
SOME KIND  
OF DISH?

TOO ECCLESIASTICAL TO BE  
A DISH...MORE OF A  
DESSERT MAYBE.  
...TIRAMISU.

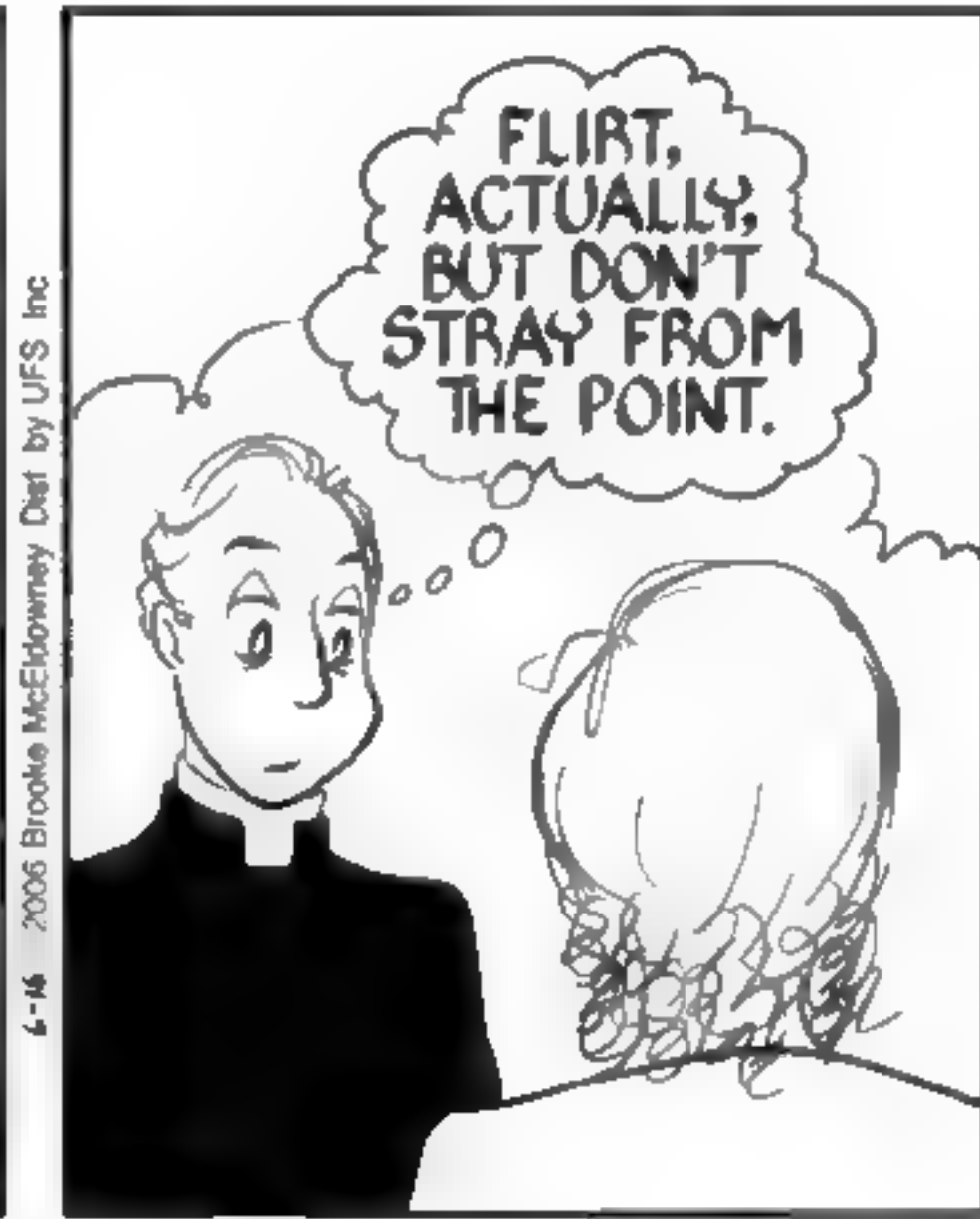
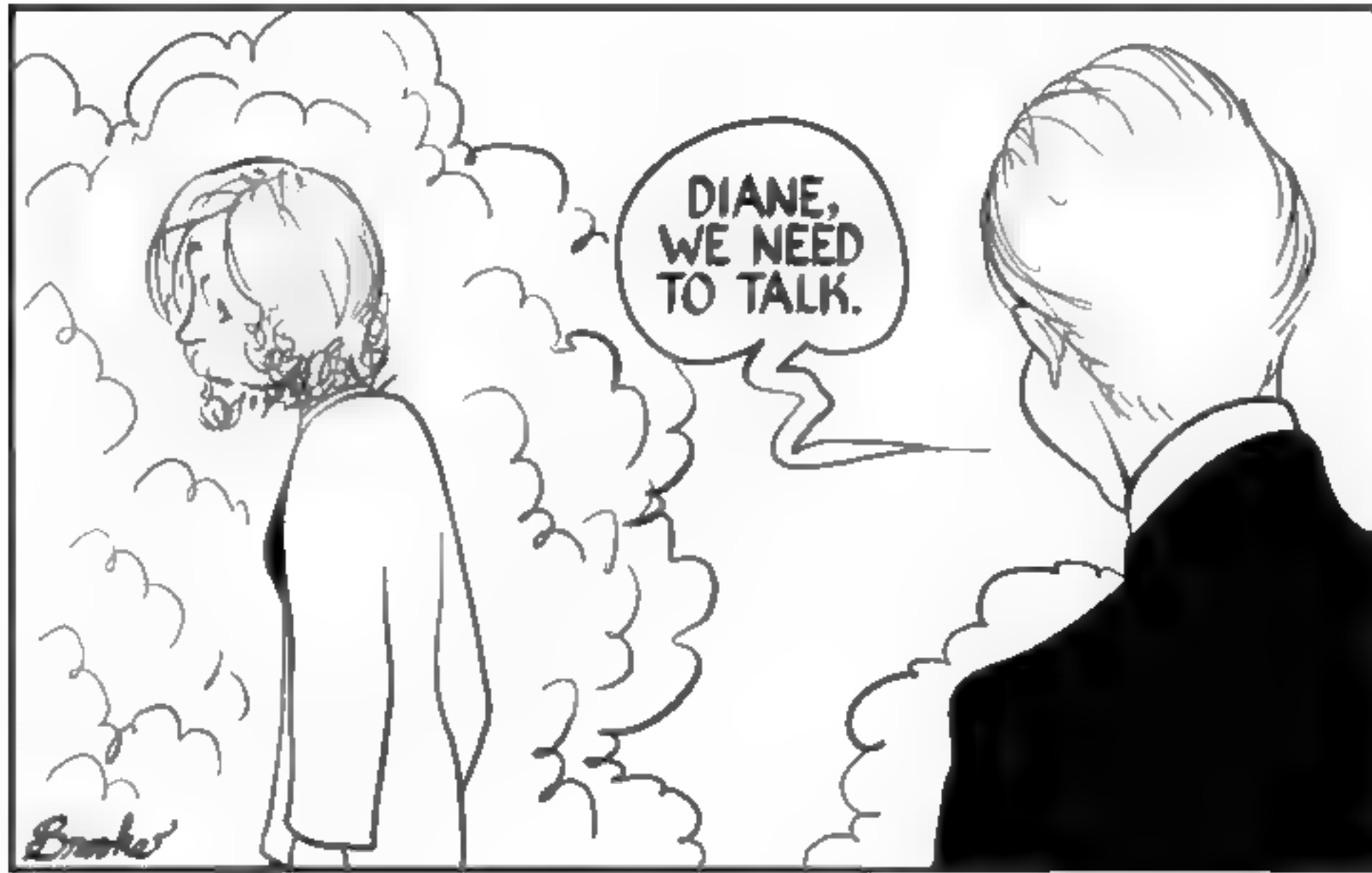
REALLY  
CUSTARDY,  
WITH COFFEE-  
SOAKED LADY-  
FINGERS?

REALLY  
CUSTARDY,  
WITH COFFEE-  
SOAKED LADY-  
FINGERS?

Oooo,  
MOMMA!  
GIMME  
A FORK!

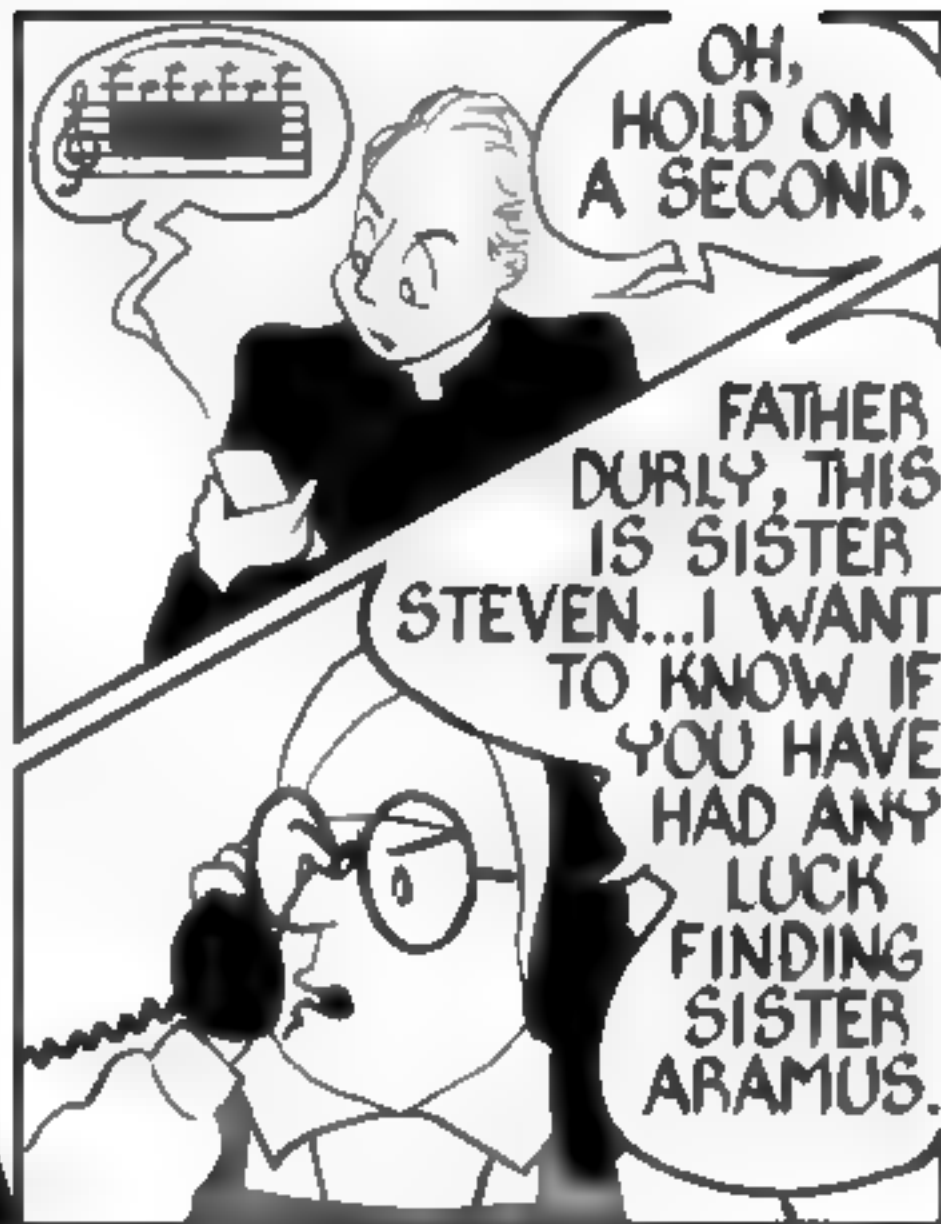
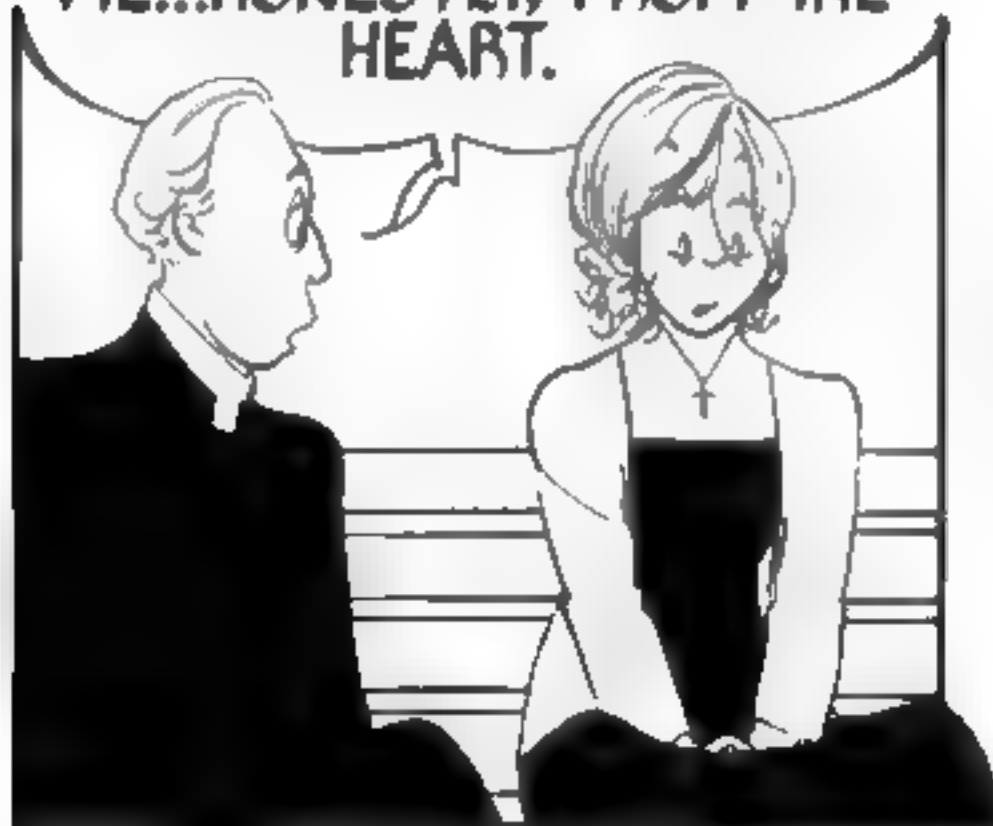
ALL  
AT ONCE  
I'M FLATTERED...  
...AND TWISTING  
IN GEHENNA.

*Brinker*





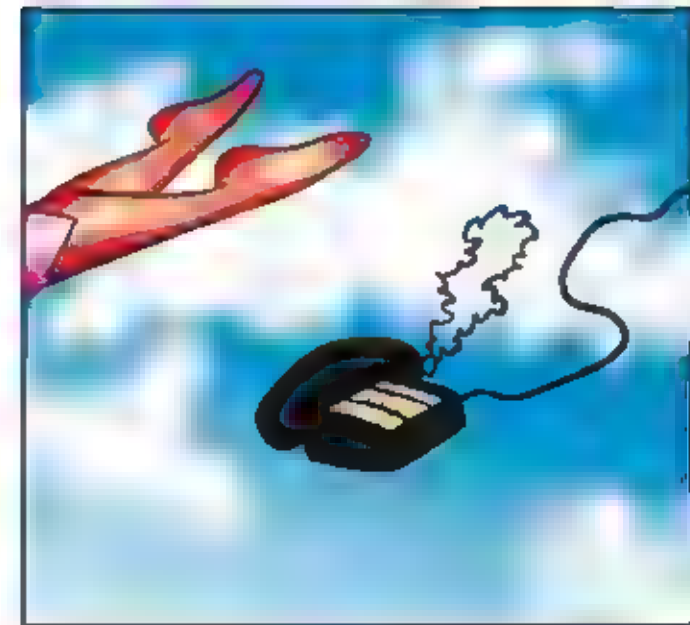
AS A FRIEND, I HAVE ENJOYED OUR TIME TOGETHER, BUT AS A PRIEST I WONDER IF I HAVE GIVEN YOU ROOM TO SPEAK WITH ME...HONESTLY, FROM THE HEART.



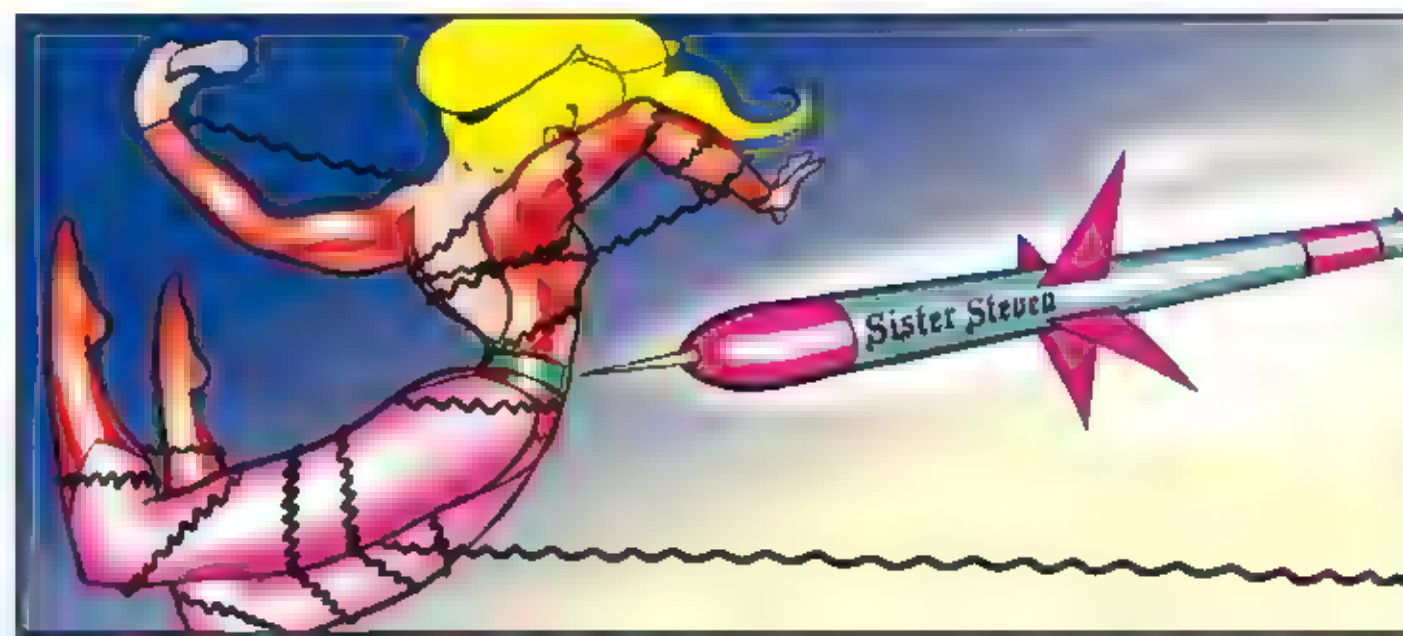
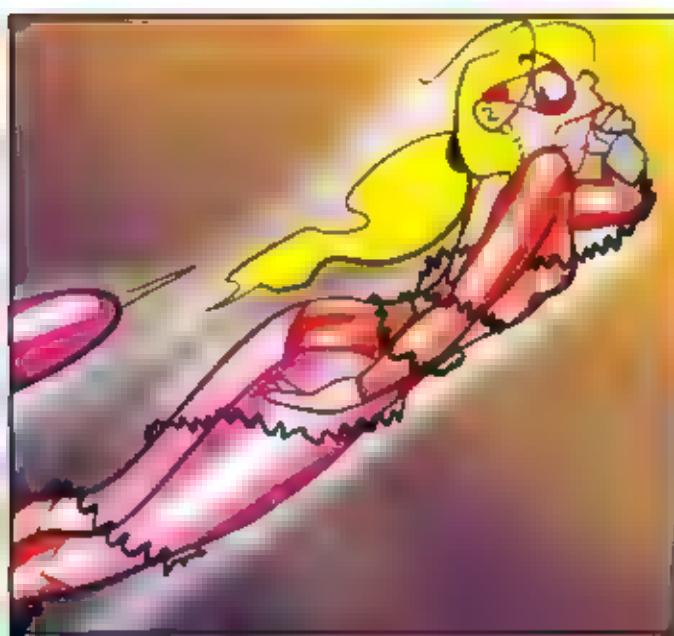
*Brooks*

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MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



Brooks

THERE'S NO BETTER  
WAY TO SPEND A DAY  
THAN RIDING THE  
CABOOSE ON A  
TRAIN OF THOUGHT.



MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



Brooks

COMMUNITY  
THEATER  
IS THE MOST  
EFFECTIVE WAY  
TO CULL THE  
NEXT GENERATION  
OF ACTORS BY  
MAKING DRAMA,  
AS A PROFESSION,  
REPELLENT  
TO THE  
TALENTED.

Who would these  
fardels bear...





MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX:  
HONCHODOM



HONCHODOM EXISTS EVERYWHERE. IT IS CARVED OUT AT THE TOP OF EVERY PECKING ORDER IN EVERY CORPORATION, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY THEATER, BLACK MARKET, ROTARY CLUB, HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, PROSTITUTION RING AND SENATE. HONCHODOM IS TAILOR-MADE FOR THE BLAND, GLAD-HANDING, FIGURE-HEADED AND SOULLESS. IT IS THE SPECIAL AERIE FROM WHICH THE MEDIOCRE MAY PUNISH THE GIFTED FOR BEING SO.

*I need  
a kiss.  
...Begin  
with my  
raiment.*



MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



*Brooke*

"HOT TALK" TELEPHONE  
SERVICES ALLOW THE  
IRRETRIEVABLY PATHETIC  
TO UNDRESS A WOMAN  
NOT WITH THEIR EYES  
BUT WITH THEIR EARS,  
THEREBY IMAGINING WHAT  
SHE SOUNDS LIKE  
NAKED.



I JUST PUT ON THIS DRESS  
EDDA LEFT BEHIND. I THINK  
IT'S WAY TOO TIGHT AND  
SHORT  
FOR ME.



WHAT'S  
WRONG?



NOTHING.  
...MY LEGS  
JUST SEEM  
TO HAVE  
GIVEN  
WAY.

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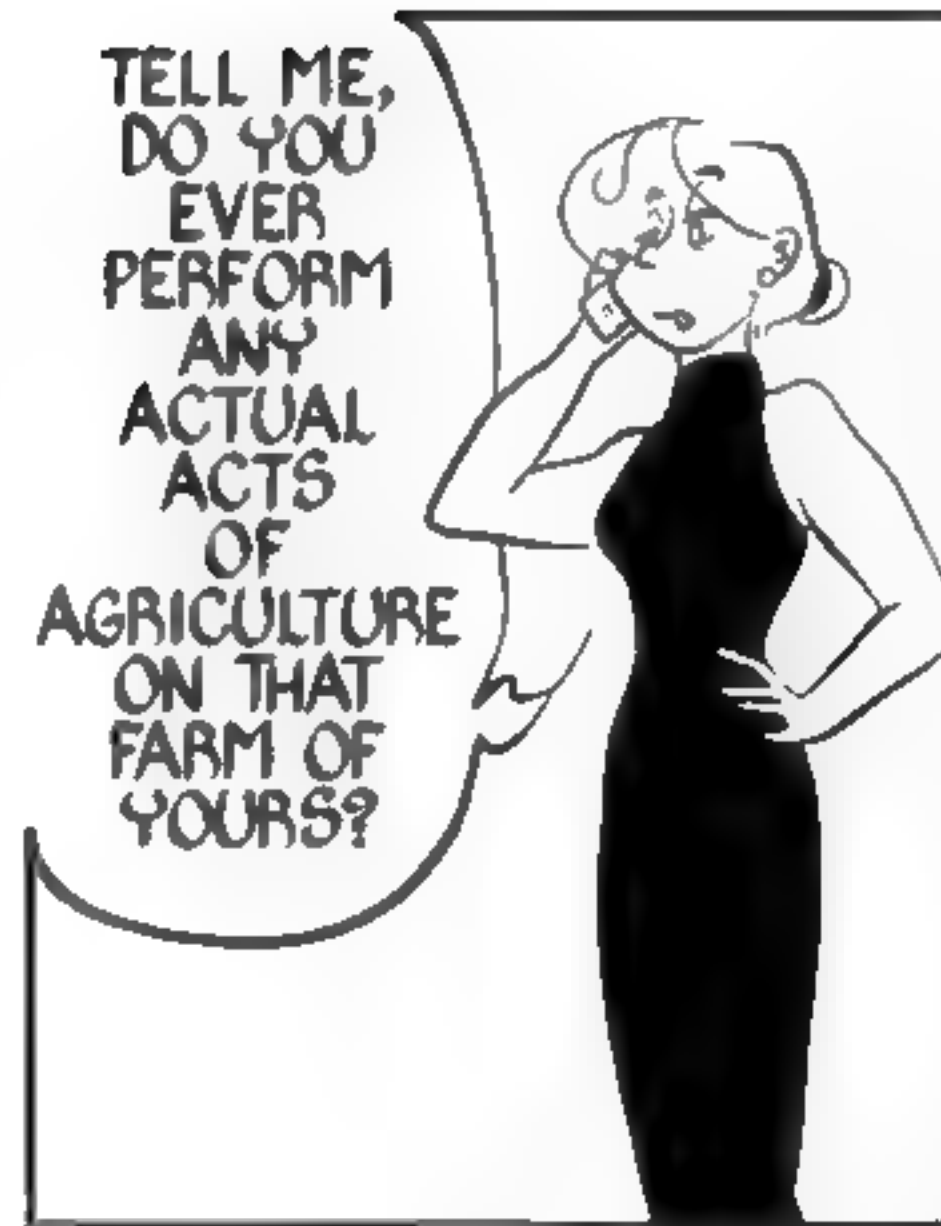


ON THE  
OTHER HAND,  
THERE IS A  
SCHOOL OF  
THOUGHT THAT  
THIS DRESS  
IS JUST  
RIGHT.

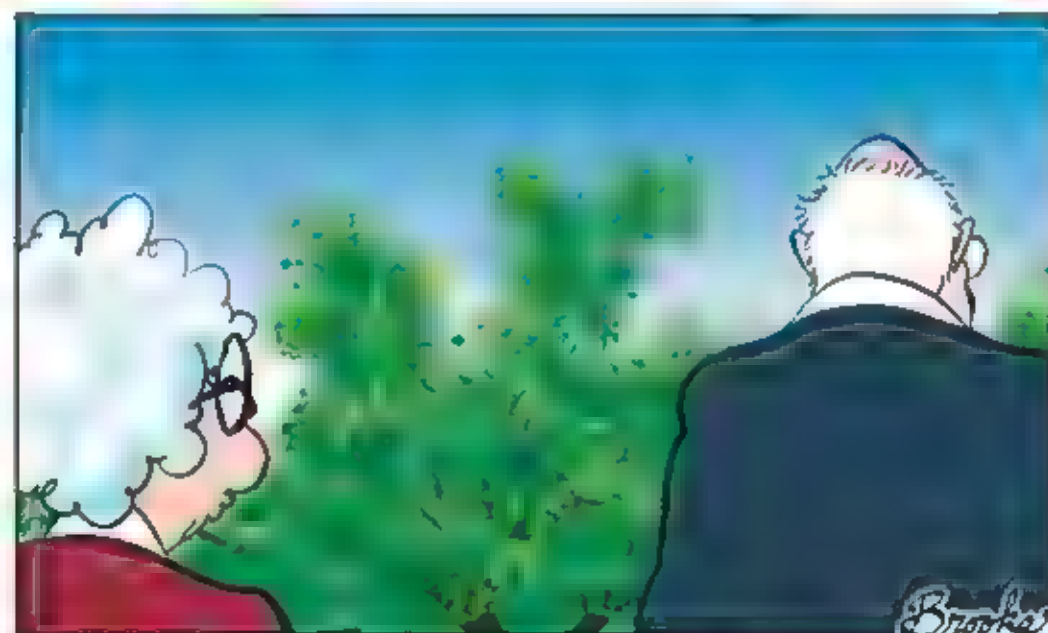
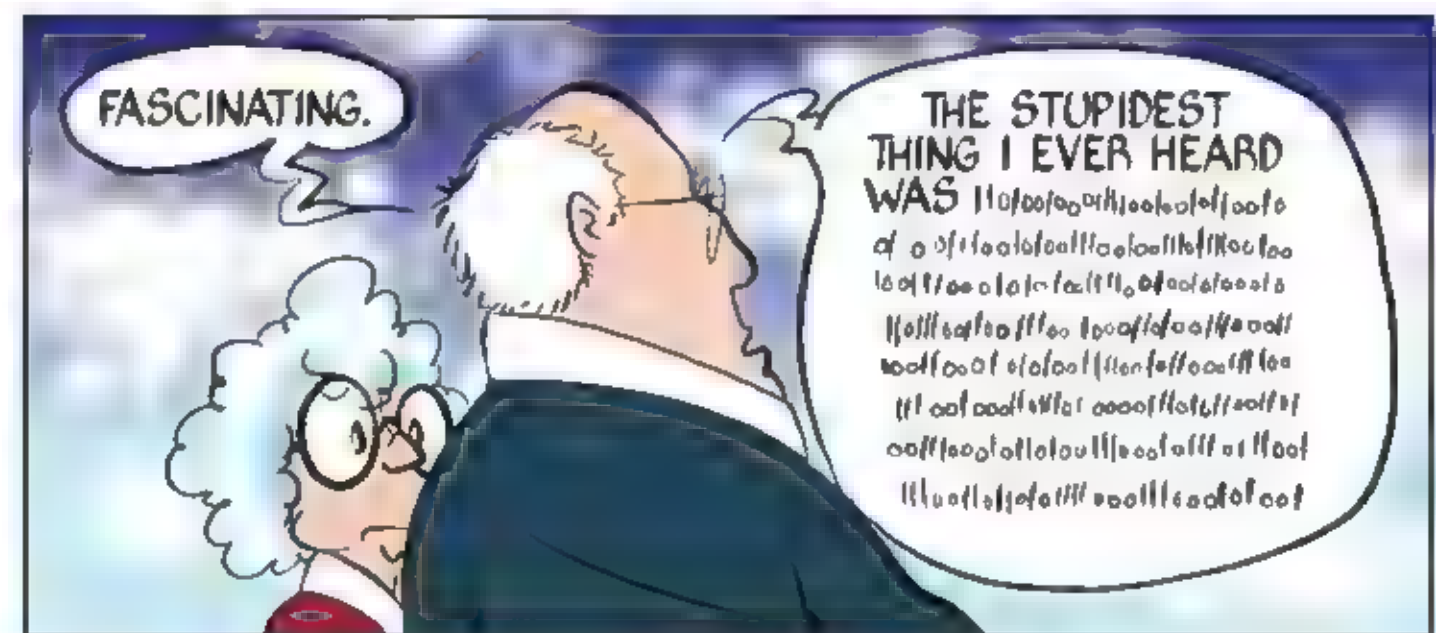
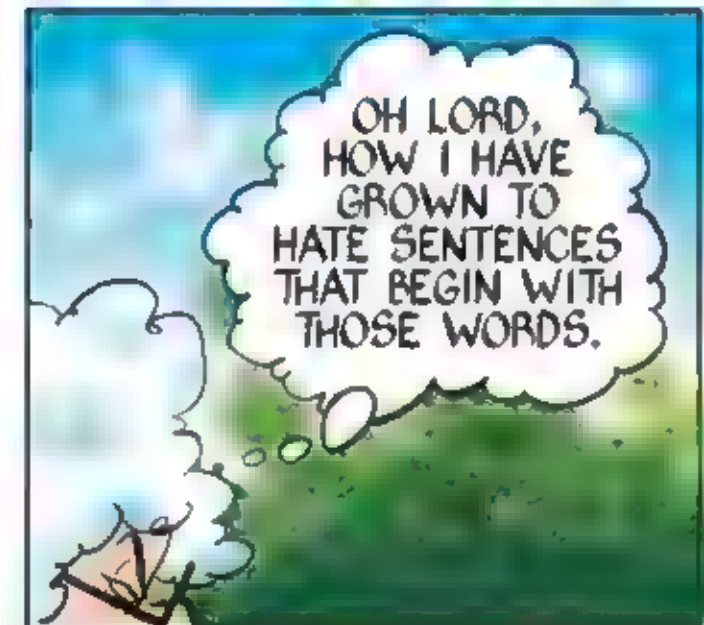
Brooke



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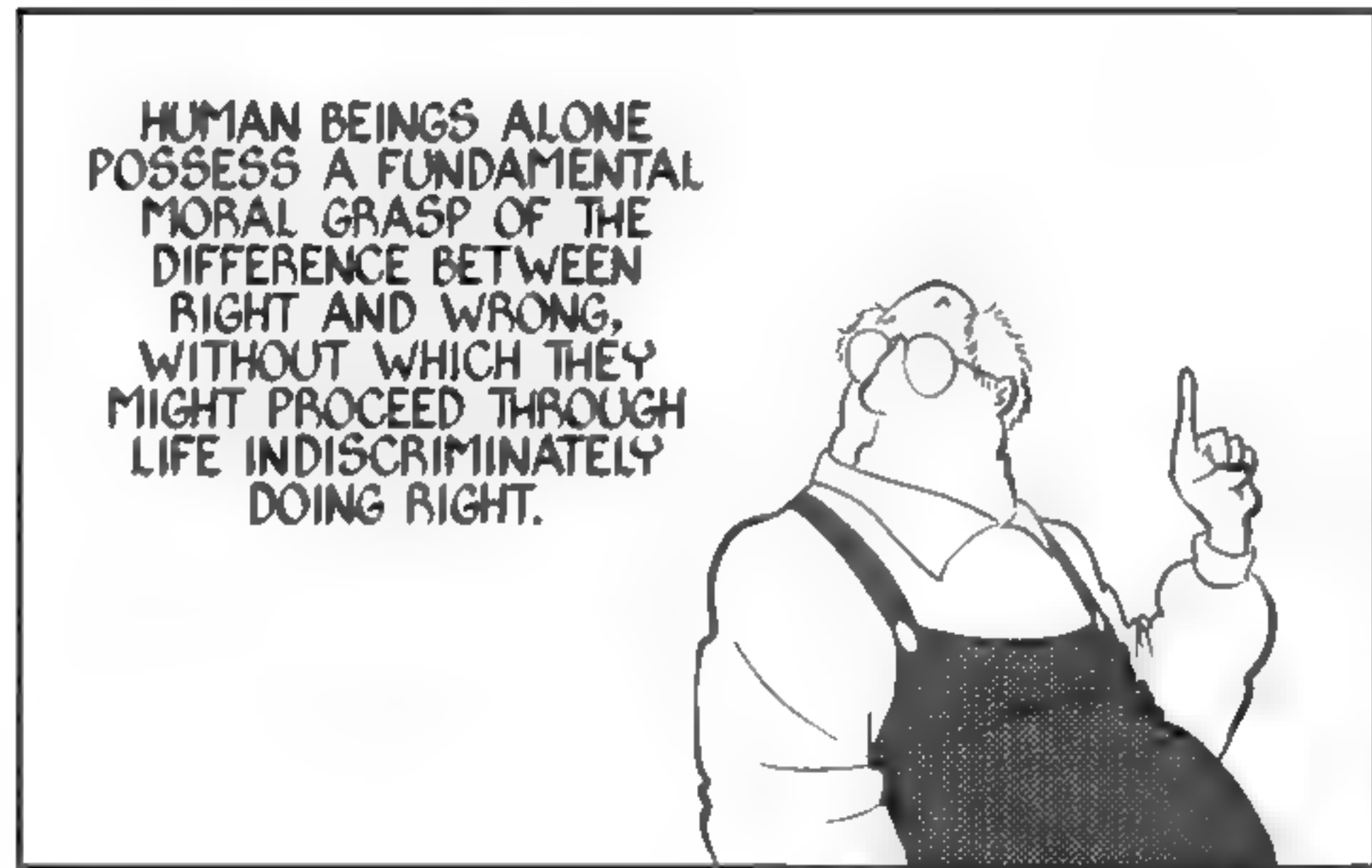
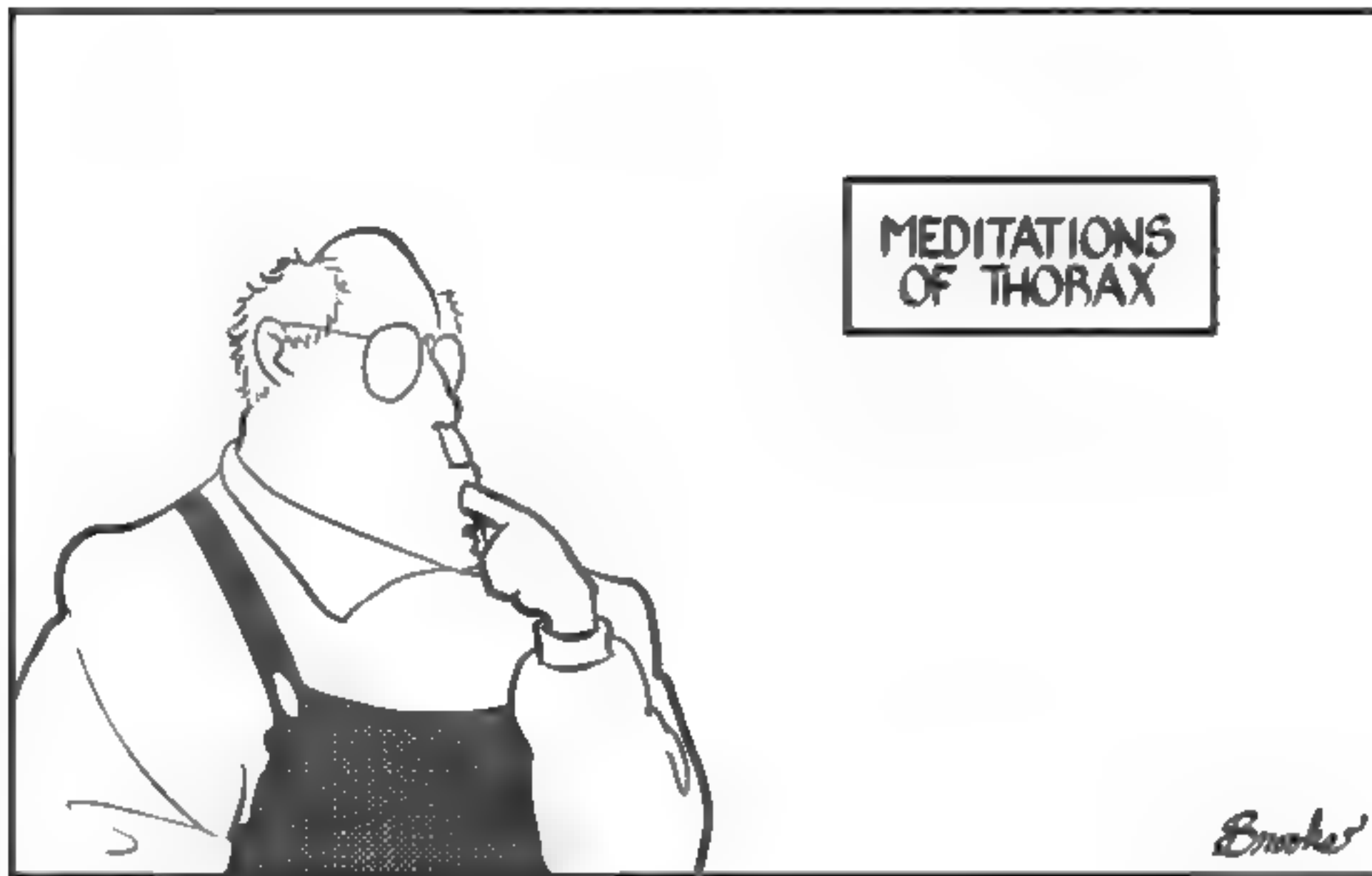
MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



Brooks



I DO NOT LOVE MY COUNTRY.  
HOWEVER, I FIND I AM  
SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO IT.



MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



*Brooks*

THERE IS NO SUCH  
THING AS AN  
ANTHROPOMORPHIC  
OMNIPOTENT  
DEITY, WHICH  
EXPLAINS WHY  
HE NEVER MOWS  
MY LAWN.





Dear Thorax,  
I am in love with a woman  
whom I cannot have.  
She is pledged to another.  
Should I tell her of my  
ardor anyway, or enlist  
in the French  
Foreign Legion?

Sadly Sighing  
in Pawtucket

*Brooke*



Dear Sadly Sighing,

The question is not one of becoming a  
legionnaire for this woman, but whether you  
would shave your armpits, tweeze your brows,  
spackle and draw on your own face, and gird  
your body in wire-reinforced trusses for her.

If you are not prepared to go  
to the lengths she employs  
every day for love,  
camel spit and  
French verb  
forms are what  
you deserve.



MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX



IT IS SAID THAT  
AN ARGUMENT IS  
BEST ADDRESSED  
BY EXAMINING IT  
FROM EVERY ANGLE.  
MY PERSONAL  
FAVORITE IS  
37.4 DEGREES.



Brooke

MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX

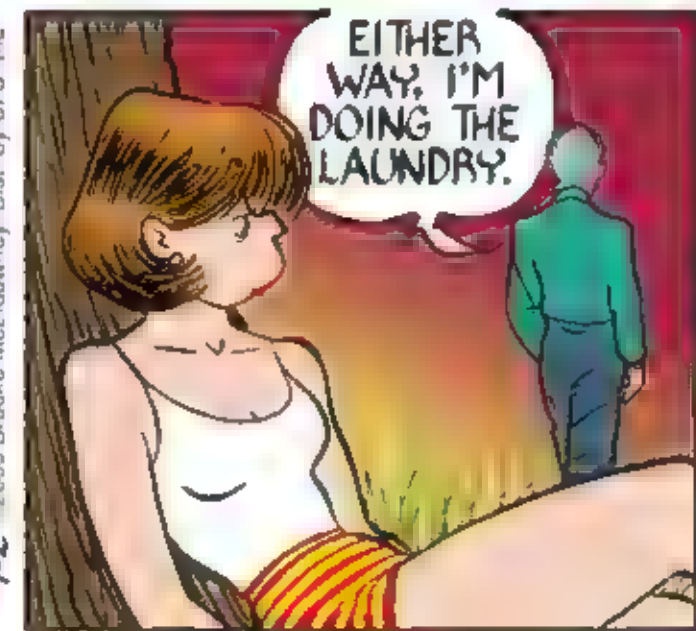
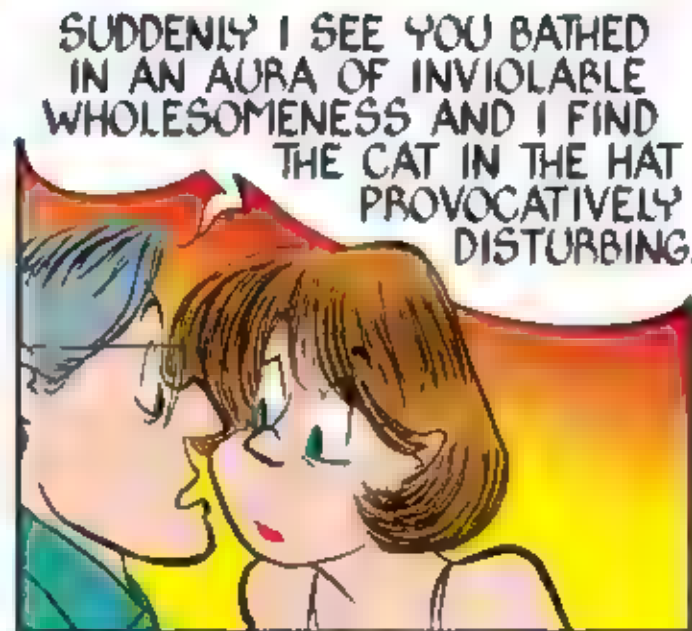
Brooke



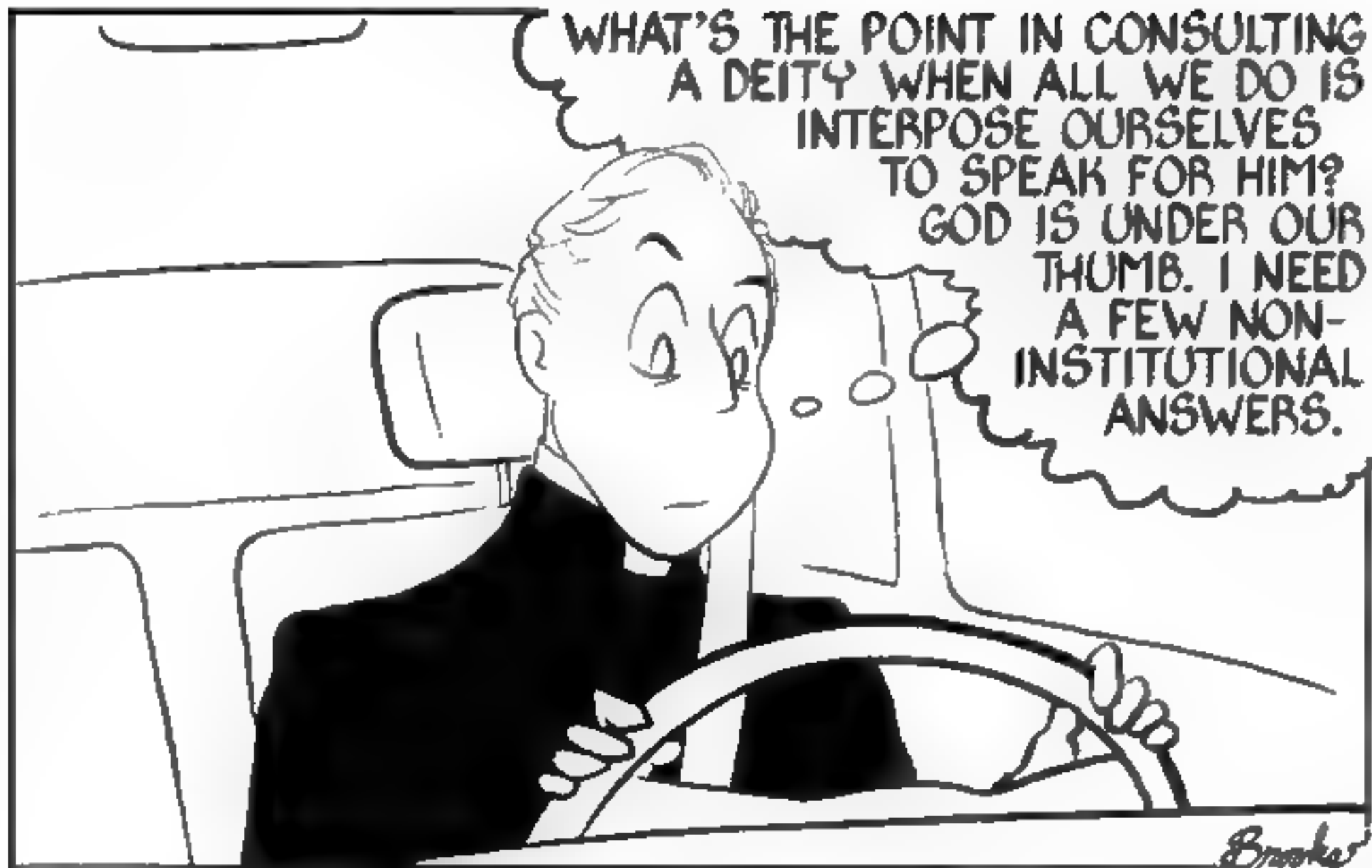
IGNORANCE IS NATURE'S  
MOST ABUNDANT FUEL  
FOR DECISION-MAKING.  
FACTS STIFLE THE WILL, HOBBLE  
CONVICTION. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE  
TO ARRIVE AT A CONCLUSION  
BURDENED BY INFORMATION.  
THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE MOST  
CONFIDENT AND WILLING JUDGE  
IS IGNORANCE, WHY STUPIDITY  
IS THE EXECUTIONER —  
AND WHY THE PRESS  
AND THE POLITICIANS  
PIMP FOR BOTH.

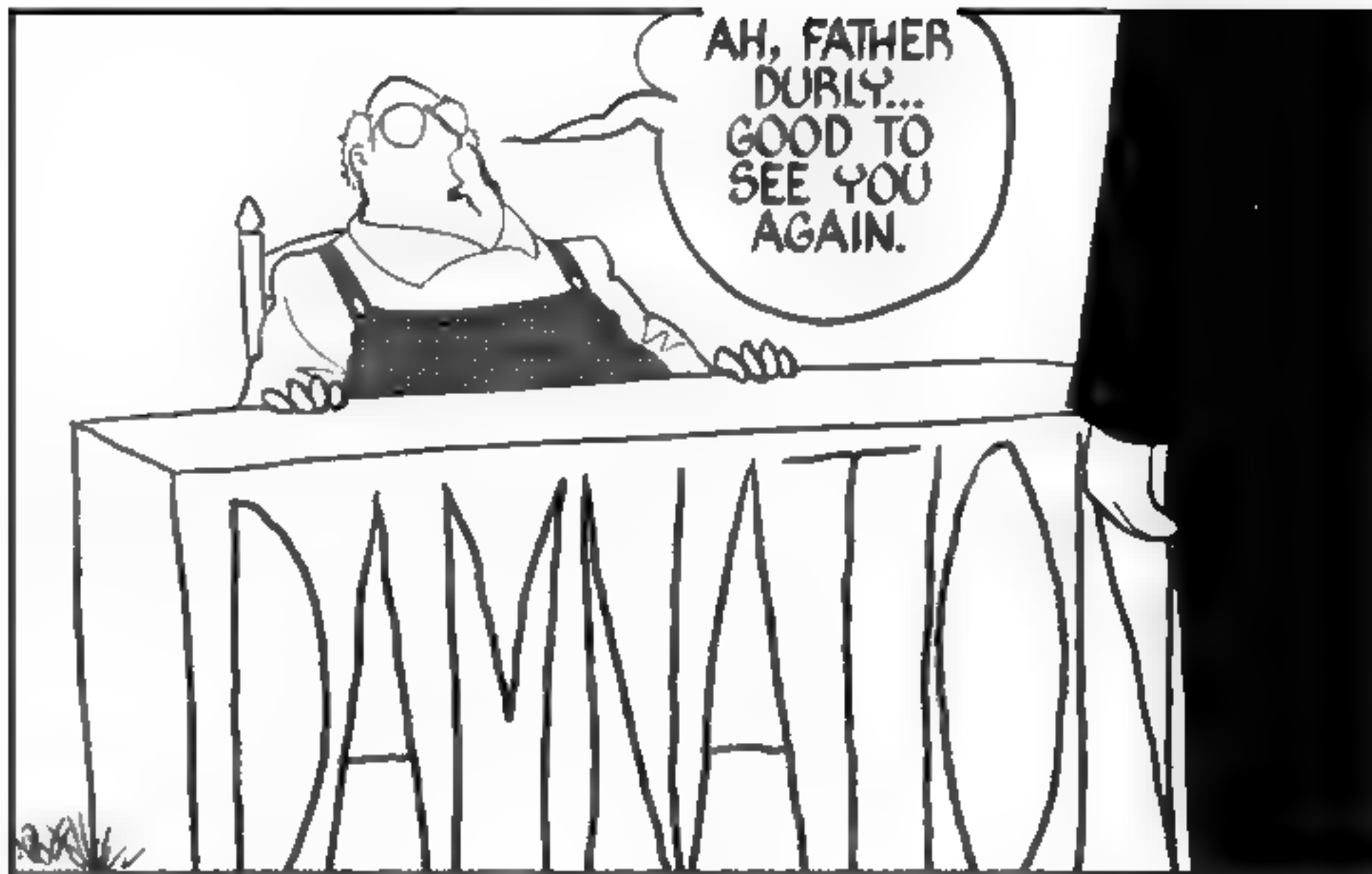


# 9 CHICKWEED LANE









YOU DON'T INTEND ME TO BELIEVE YOU'RE METING OUT ETERNAL TORMENT FROM A ROADSIDE FRUIT STAND?!

IN FACT, I'M JUST THE CONTRACTOR.

I DO THE ACTUAL PLUNGING OF MISCREANTS INTO HELLFIRE...  
...BUT IT'S

MONTY WHO MAKES UP THE LIST AND CHECKS IT TWICE.

HE SOUNDS MORE LIKE SANTA CLAUS THAN THE ALMIGHTY.

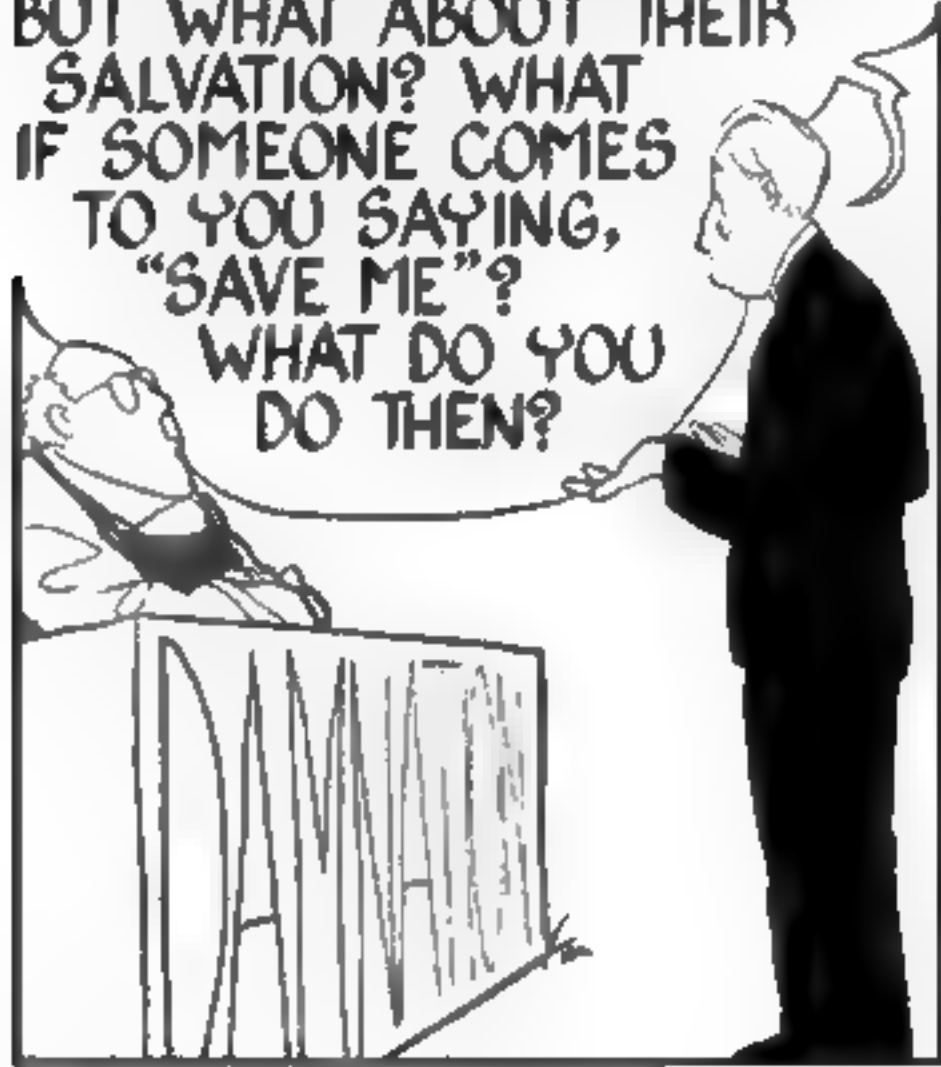
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MY CLIENT LIST IS ADMITTEDLY EXTENSIVE, BUT I'VE NEVER...

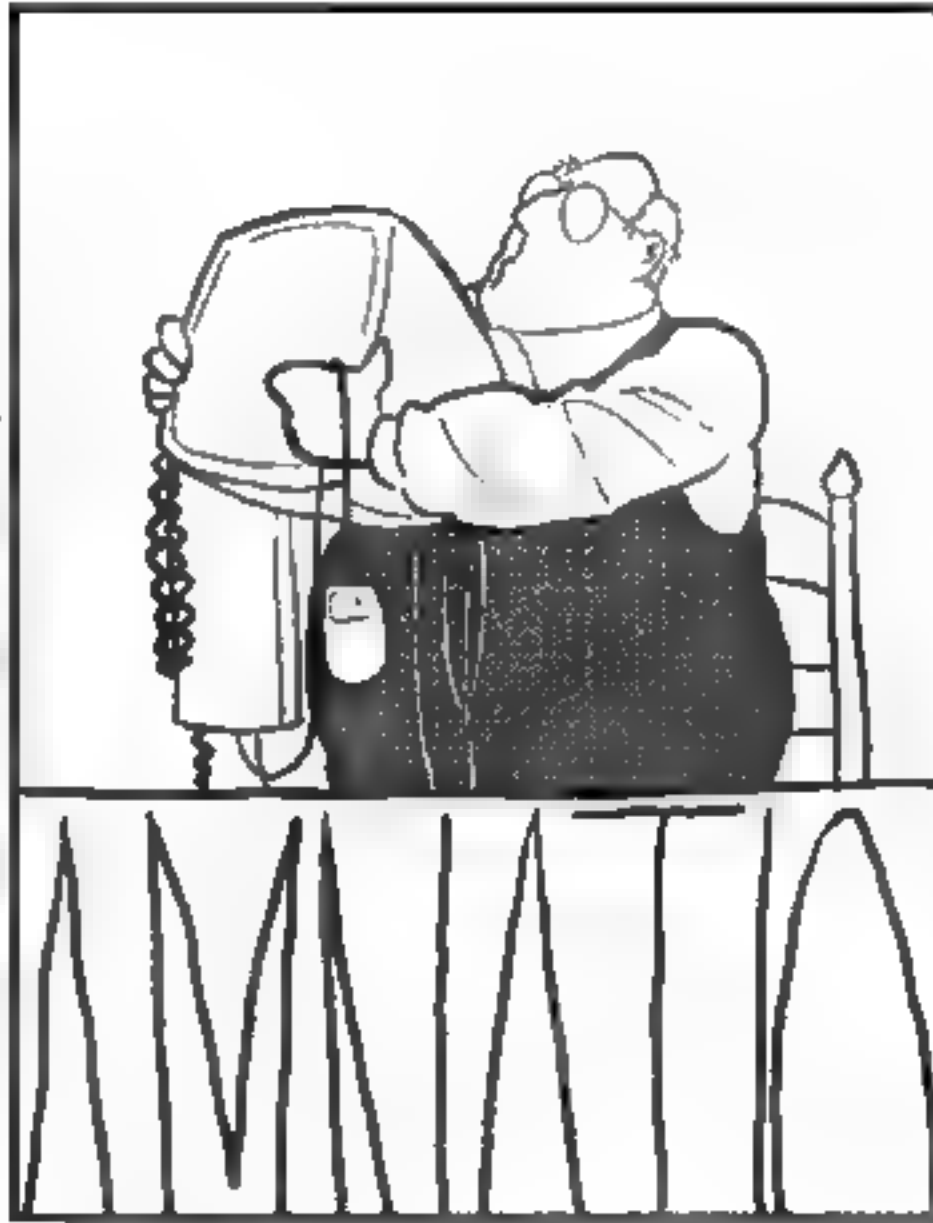
UM...  
...EXCUSE ME, I HAVE TO MAKE A SHORT CALL...

KRIS?...THORAX...LOOK, A FINE POINT JUST AROSE ABOUT WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING WITH THE NAUGHTY CHILDREN. I WANT TO MAKE SURE WE'RE ON THE SAME PAGE...

IT'S ONE THING TO SEE TO  
THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS,  
BUT WHAT ABOUT THEIR  
SALVATION? WHAT  
IF SOMEONE COMES  
TO YOU SAYING,  
"SAVE ME"?  
WHAT DO YOU  
DO THEN?



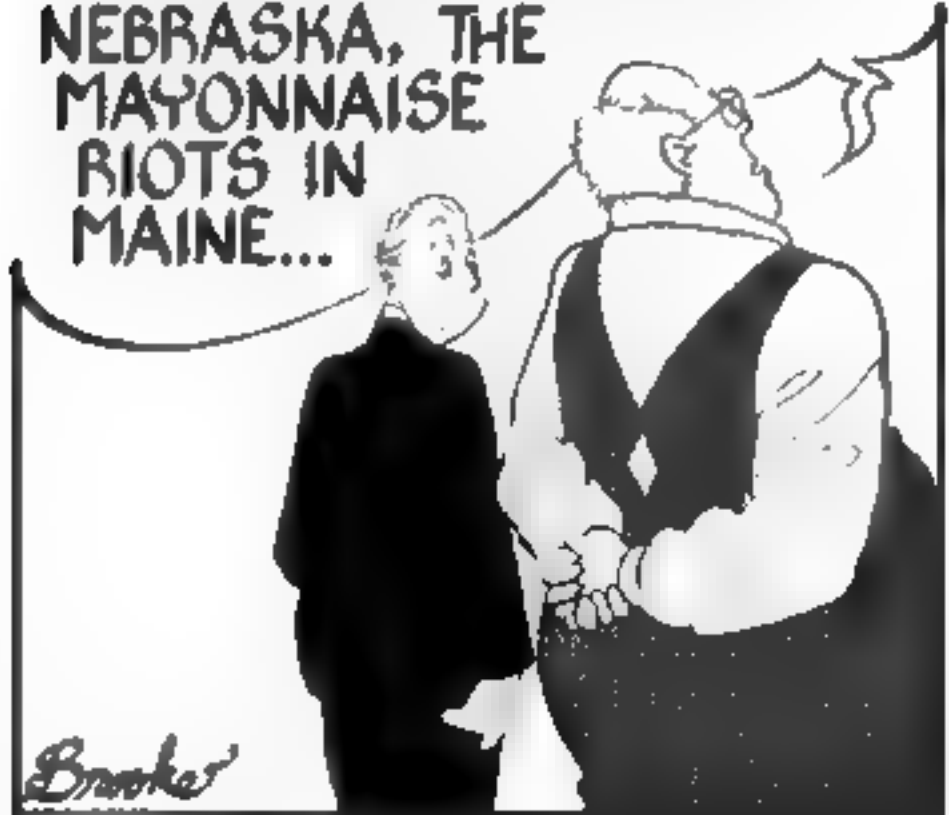
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*Brooke*



ONE OF THE PERKS OF BEING  
MONTY'S CONTRACTOR IS  
I GET THE INSIDE SCOOP  
ON FUTURE EVENTS...  
...FOR INSTANCE, THERE'S  
THE LOCUST BLACKOUT IN  
NEBRASKA, THE  
MAYONNAISE  
RIOTS IN  
MAINE...



Brooke

THE SPONTANEOUSLY  
COMBUSTING FIFE AND DRUM  
CORPS IN PERTH AMBOY,  
THE MOMENT WHEN THE  
WORD "NUCLEAR" IS  
PRONOUNCED CORRECTLY  
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
CAUSING TIRE-SCREECHING  
AND STUPEFACTION  
IN THE STREETS...

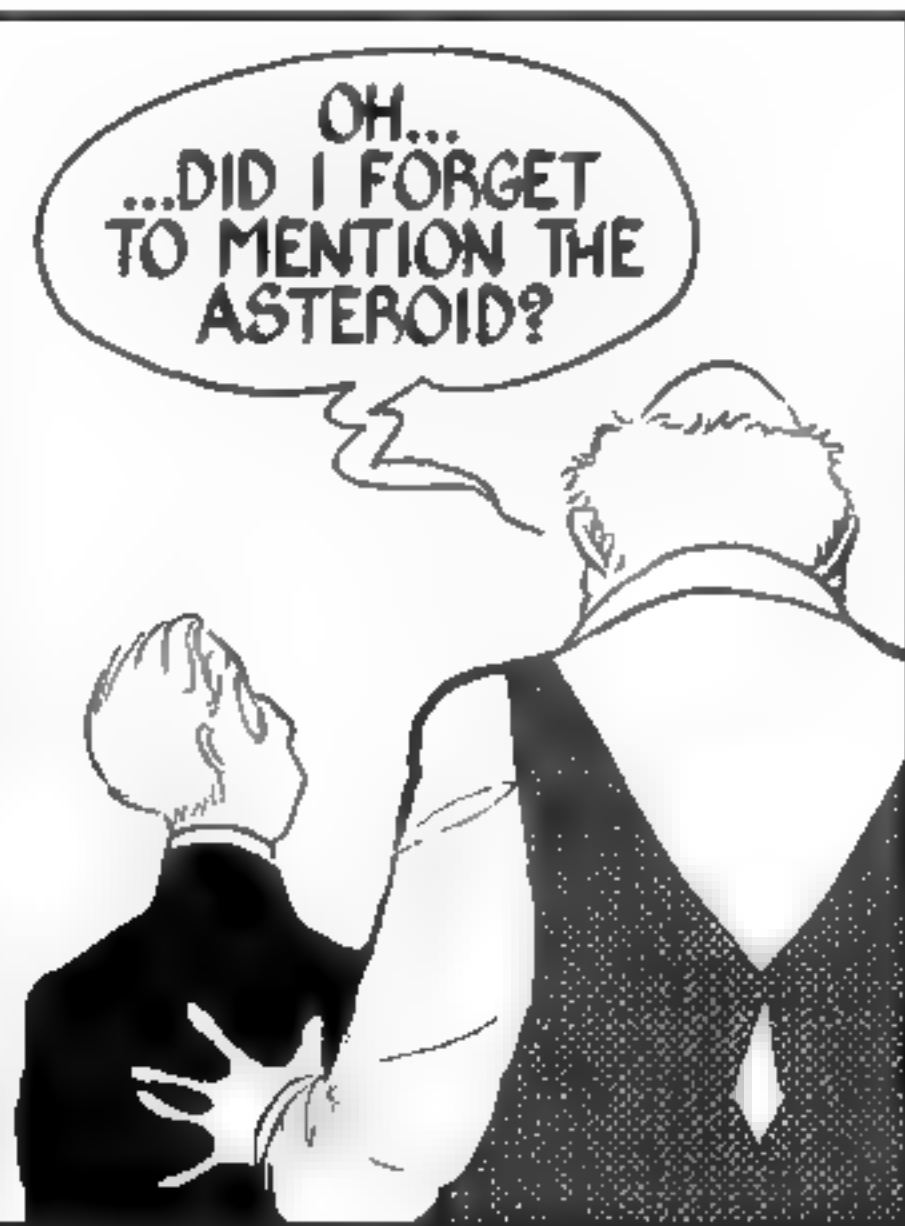


...AND ALL THIS WILL  
OCCUR WITHIN THE NEXT  
71 HOURS.



DON'T  
YOU MEAN  
THE NEXT  
72 HOURS?

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OH...  
...DID I FORGET  
TO MENTION THE  
ASTEROID?

*Brooks*

AN  
ASTEROID!?

IN 71 HOURS  
AND SIX  
MINUTES.



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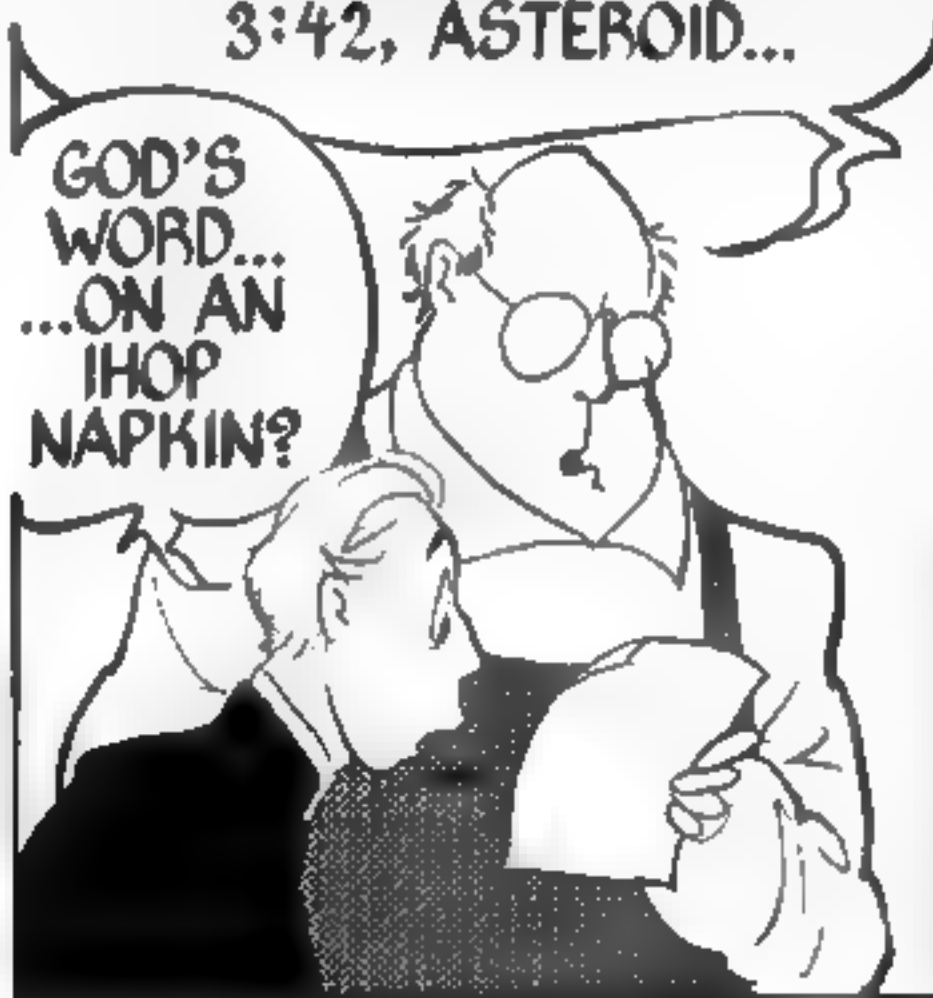
THAT  
CAN'T  
BE TRUE!

MONTY'S A  
STICKLER FOR  
PRECISION.

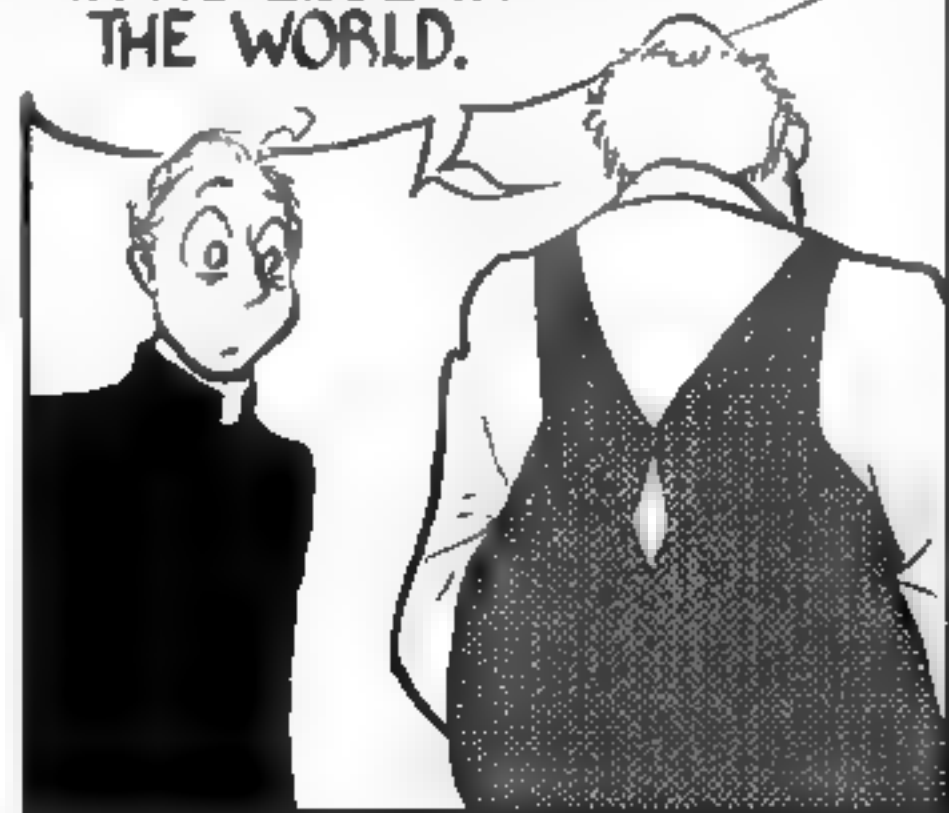


I HAVE HIS MEMO  
RIGHT HERE...12:30, LUNCH;  
1:30, CRIBBAGE; 3:05, NAP;  
3:42, ASTEROID...

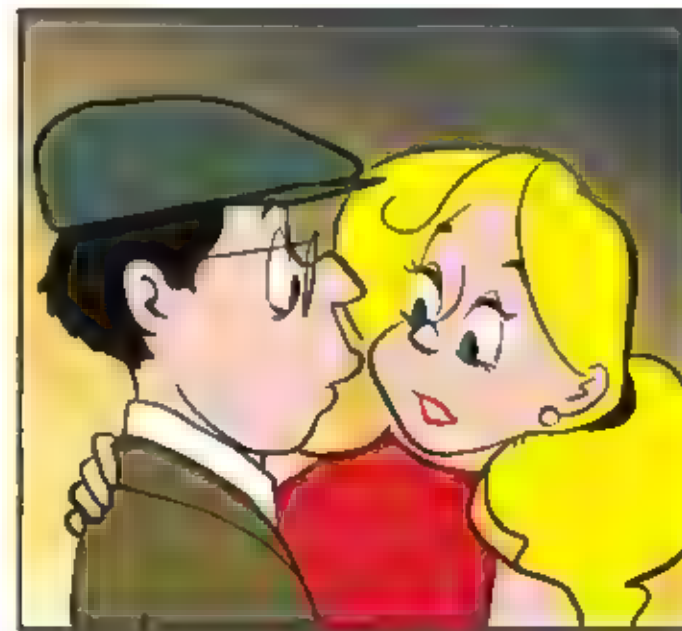
GOD'S  
WORD...  
...ON AN  
IHOP  
NAPKIN?



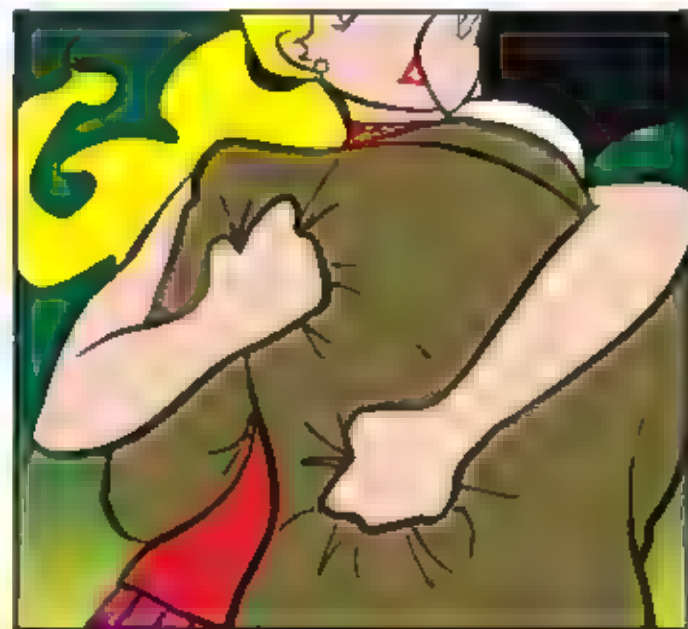
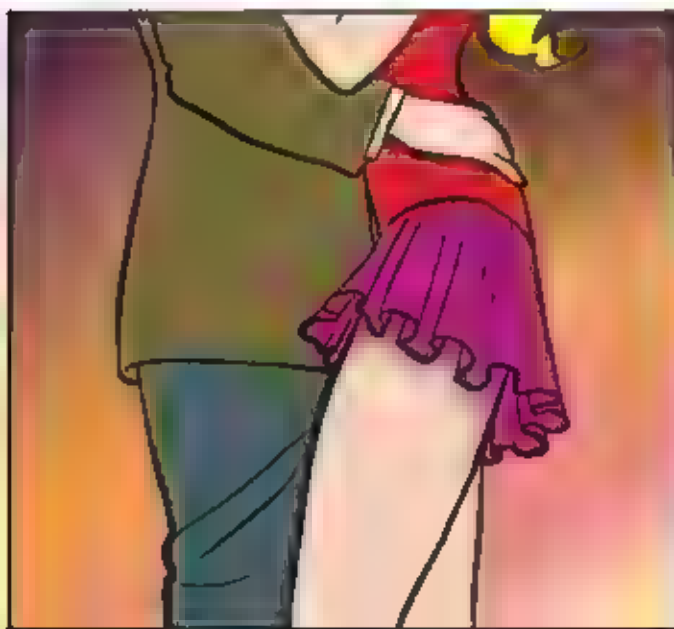
THE POINT ISN'T THE  
ASTEROID...IT IS WHAT YOU  
WANT MOST IN THE NEXT  
71 HOURS...WHAT YOU  
DESIRE MORE THAN ANY-  
THING ELSE IN  
THE WORLD.

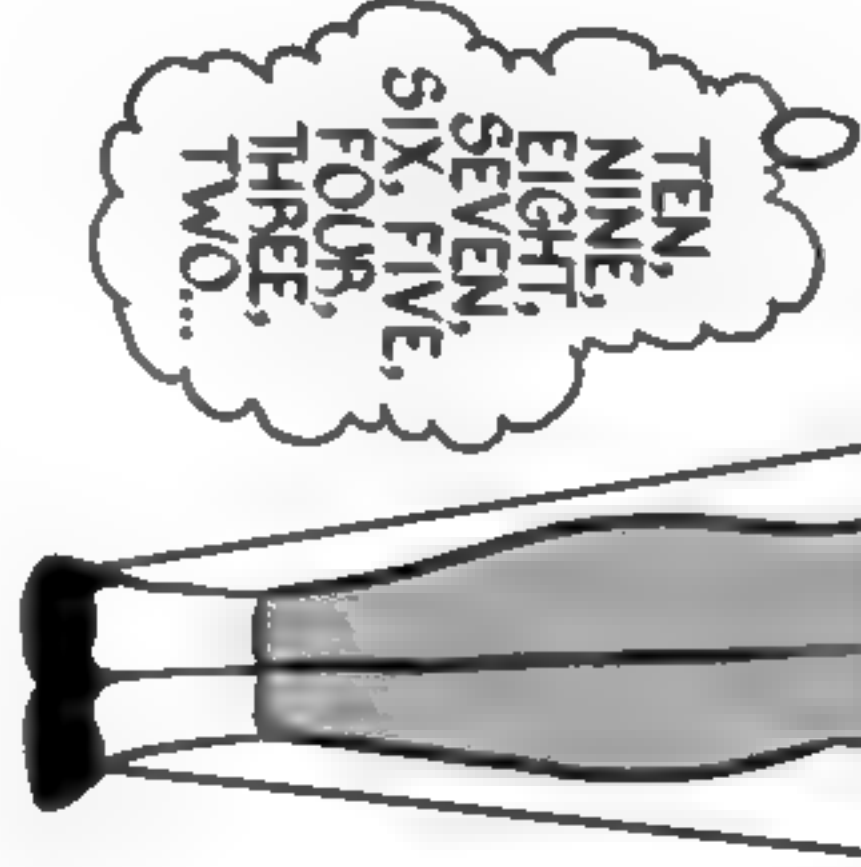


# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

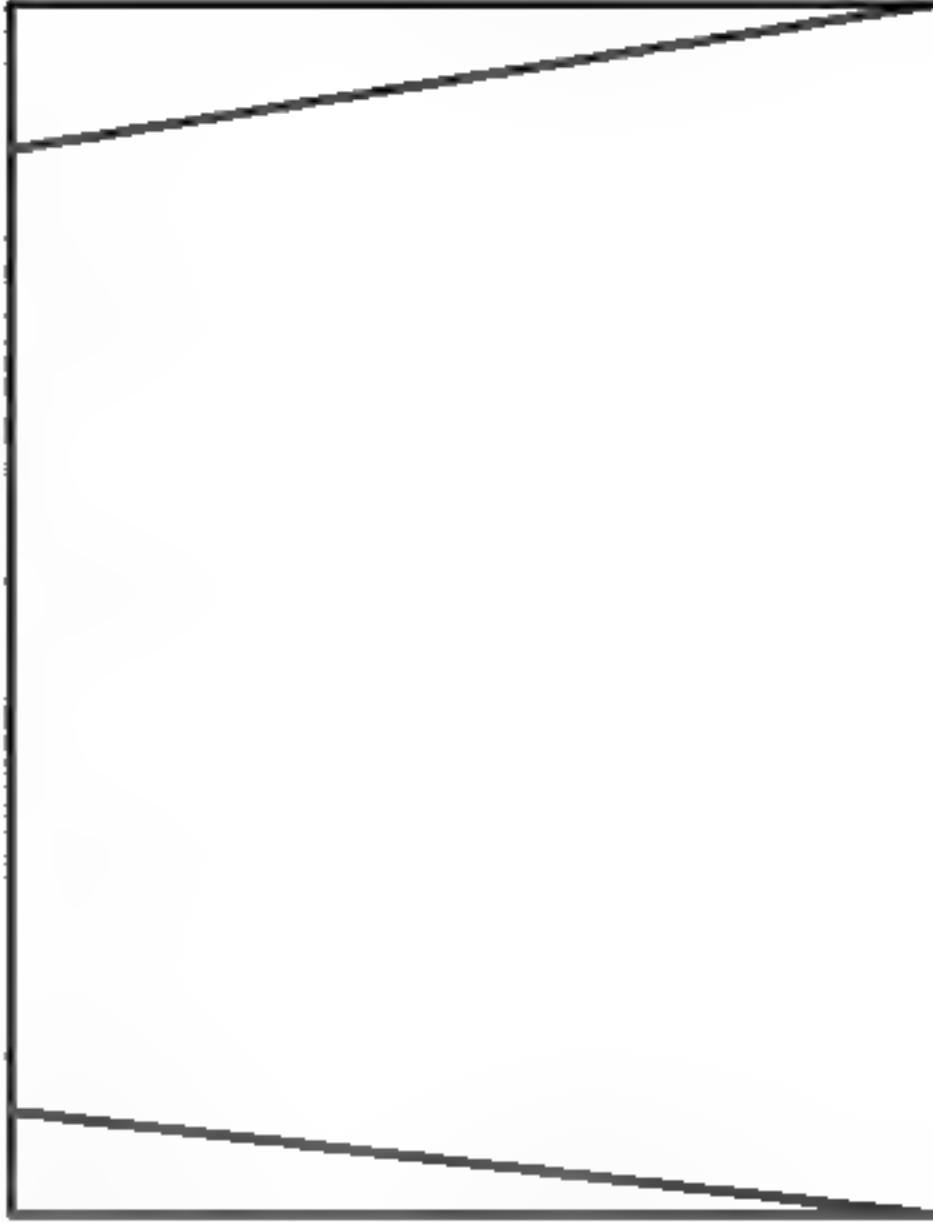
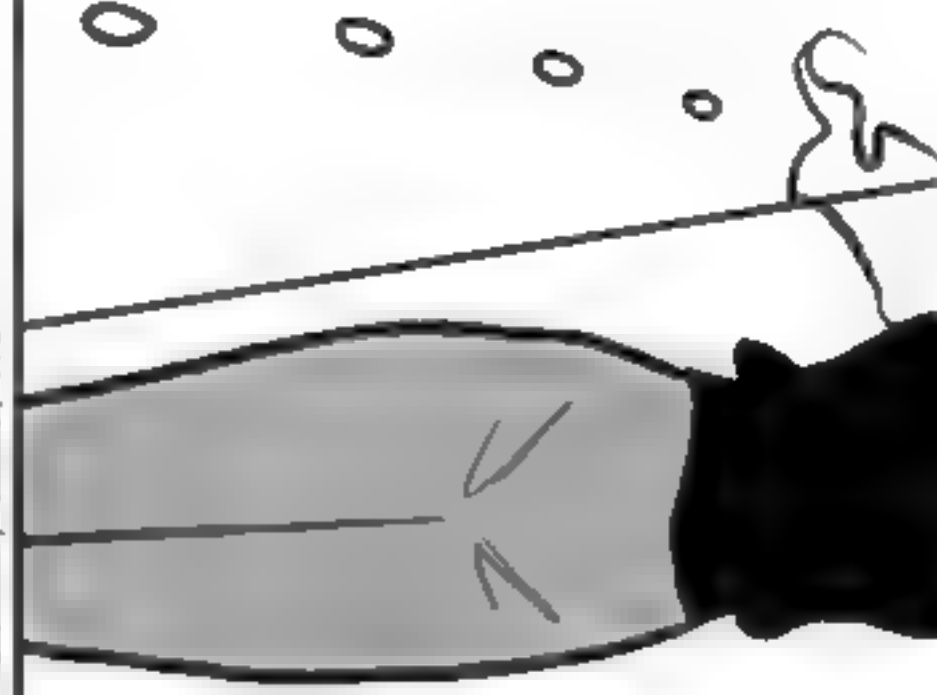


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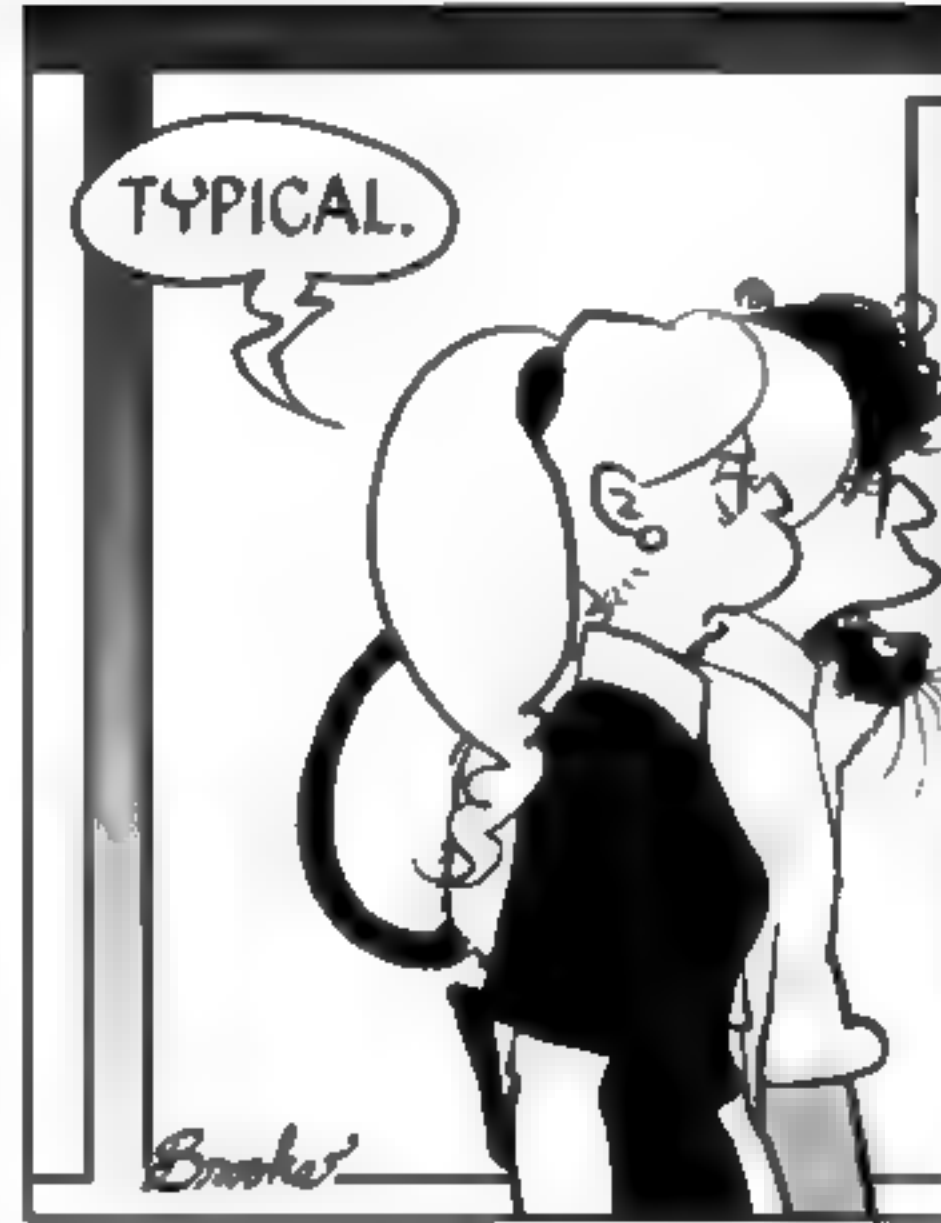
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7-6 ©2004 Brooke McEldowney Dist. by LFS, Inc

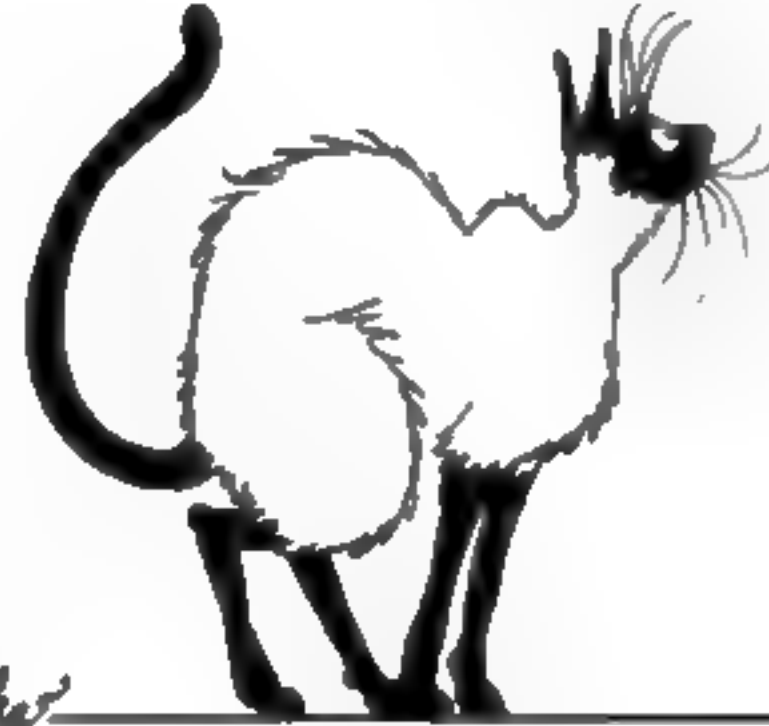




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Brooke

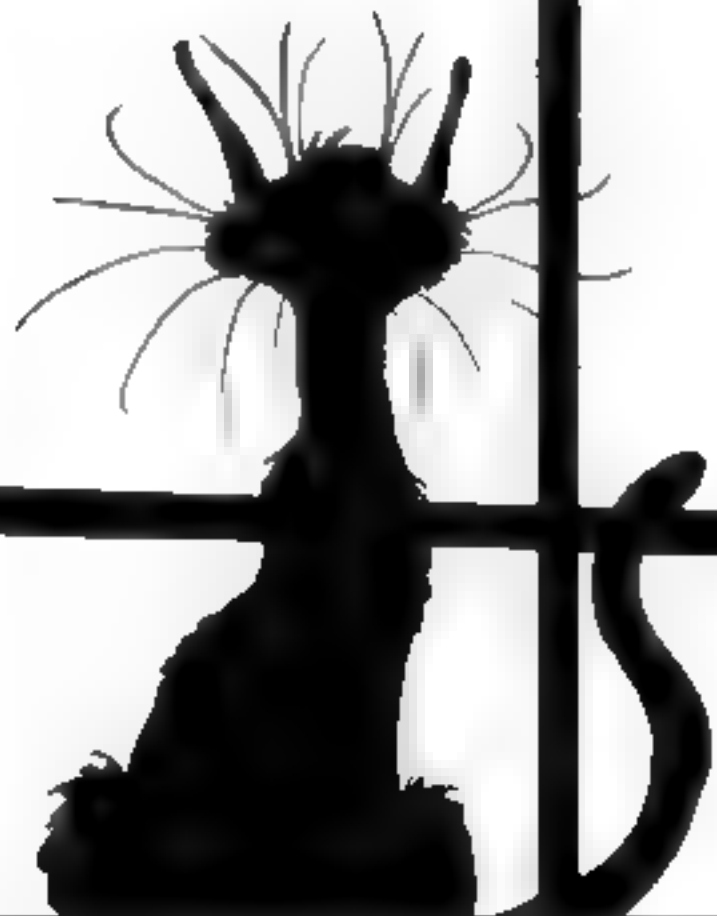


THE  
IMPORTANCE  
OF NAIL  
TRIMS.





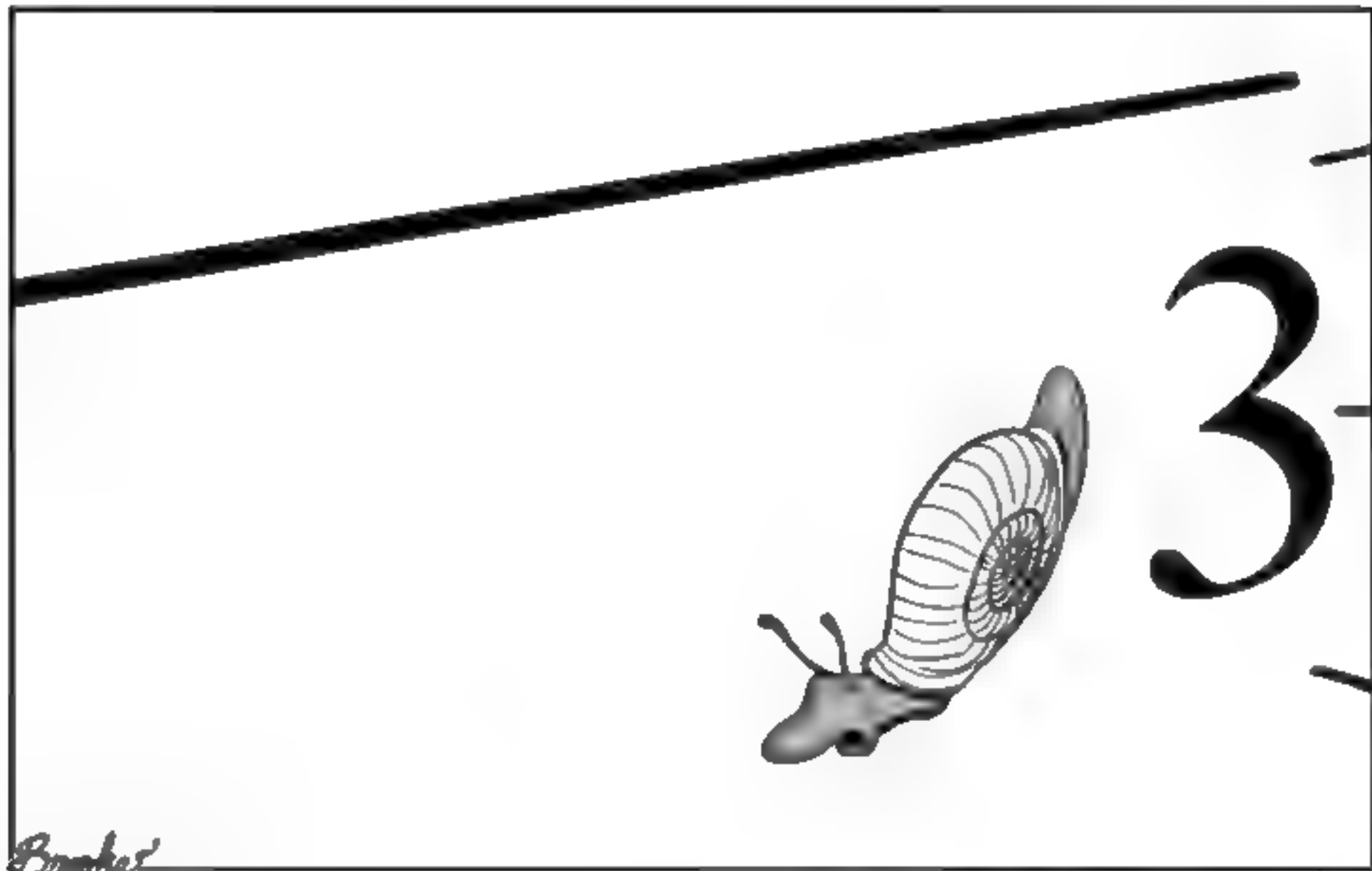
HALLMARKS  
OF FELINITY  
No. 183



FLAWED  
VIGILANCE

*Brooks*

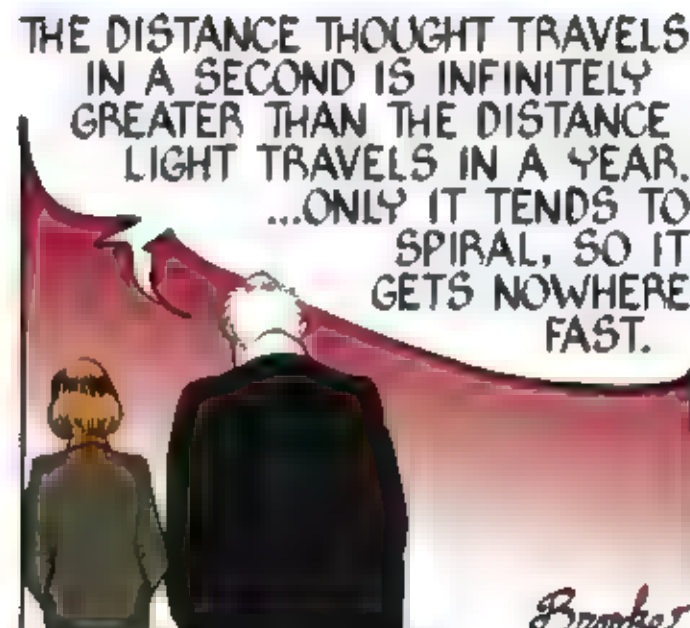
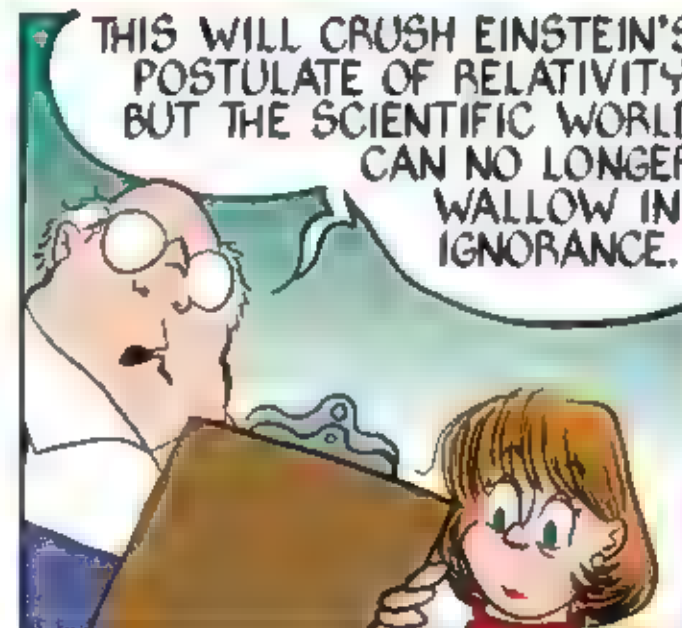
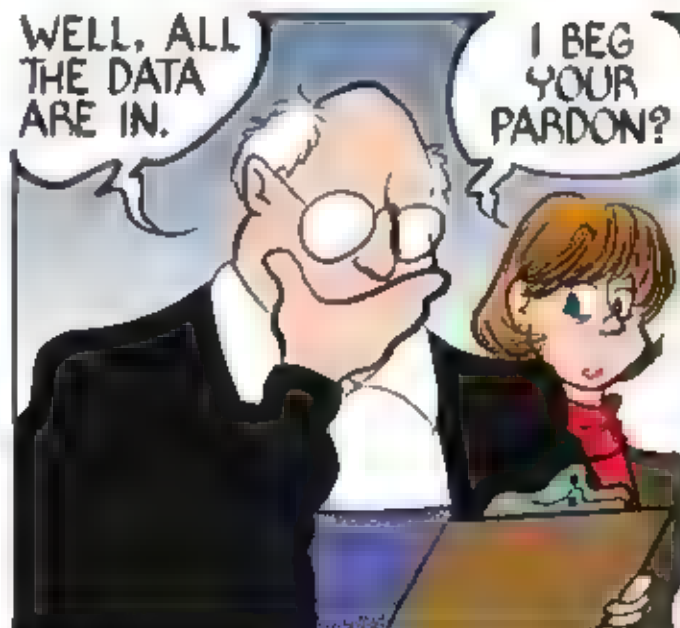






# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

®



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Brooke

Brooke



YOU TOLD HIM  
ABOUT THE ASTEROID!?

HUMANITY  
HAS TO  
PREPARE,  
PAP.



WHAT ABOUT THE  
CHOCOLATE FROZEN  
YOGURT EPIPHANY  
YOU HAD LAST  
WEEK?

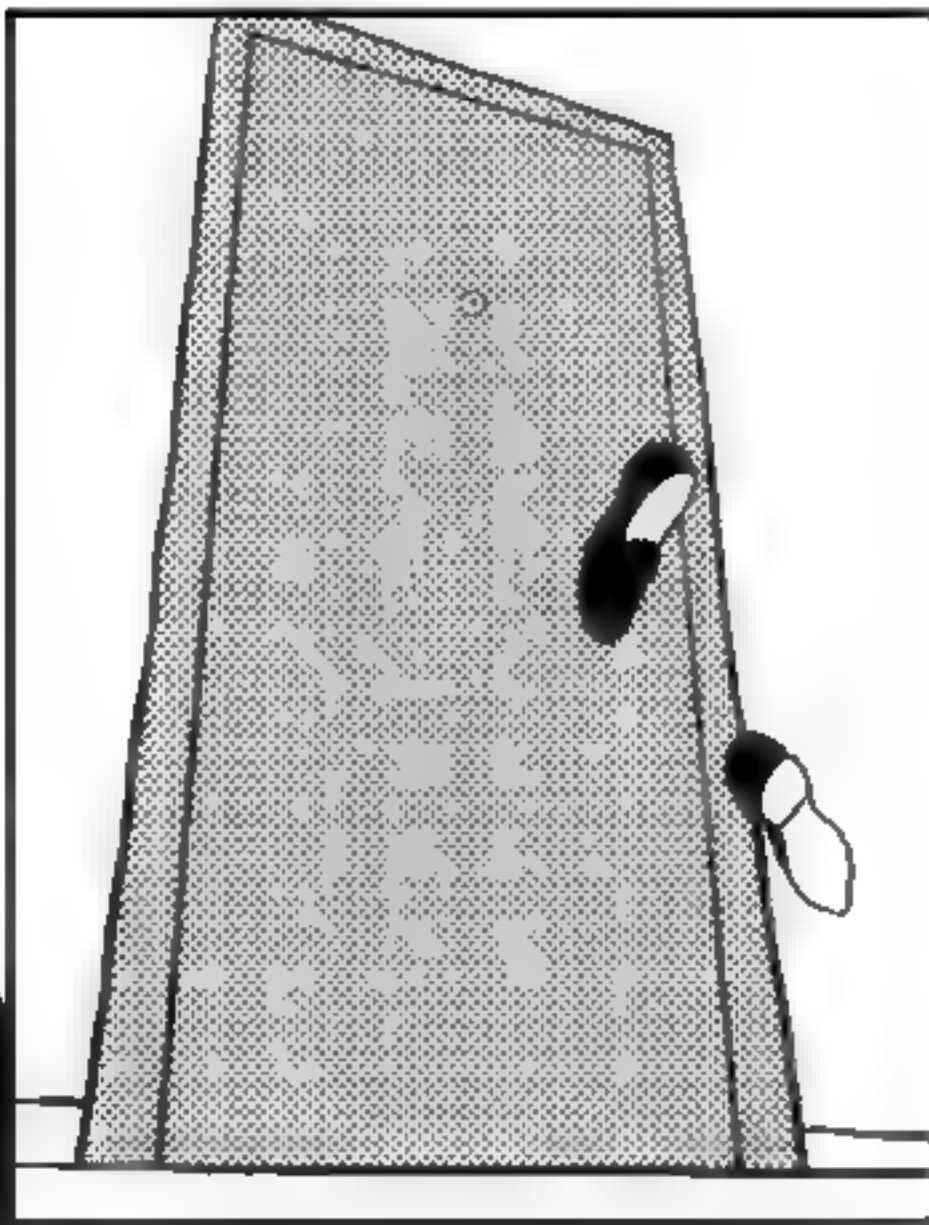


AND CAUSE  
PANIC IN THE  
STREETS?

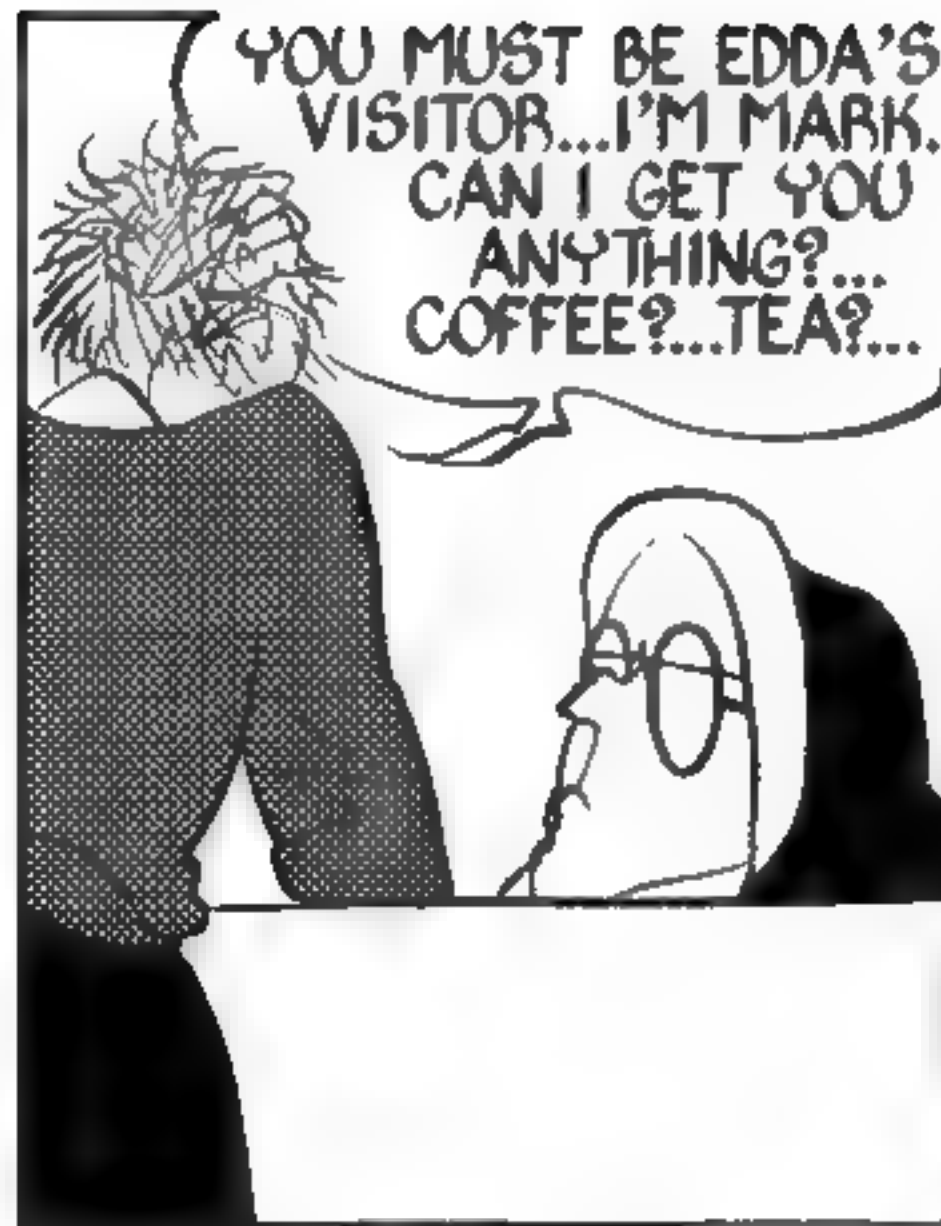
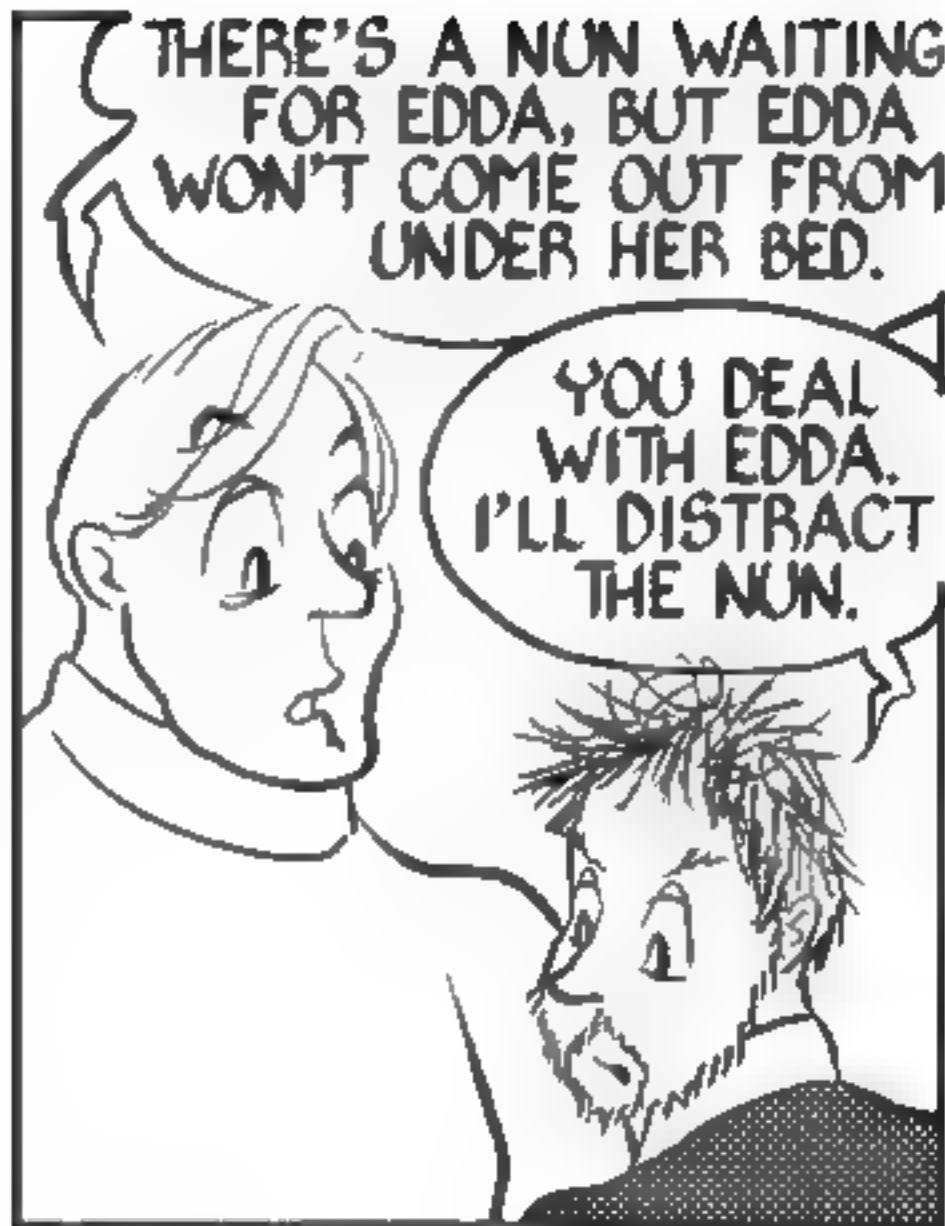


I  
GUESS  
YOU'RE  
RIGHT.









THIS ISN'T AN EXTRA FROM  
"THE SOUND OF MUSIC."  
THIS IS MY OLD  
HEADMISTRESS.  
SHE HAS SAW  
TEETH AND  
DEVOURS  
BROKEN  
GLASS  
BY  
THE  
MOON-  
LIGHT.



UM...  
...HELLO,  
SISTER.



SWEETY, IT'S SO  
LOVELY TO SEE  
YOU AGAIN!  
I'VE MISSED  
YOU SO  
MUCH!  
YOU  
LOOK  
BREATH-  
TAKING!

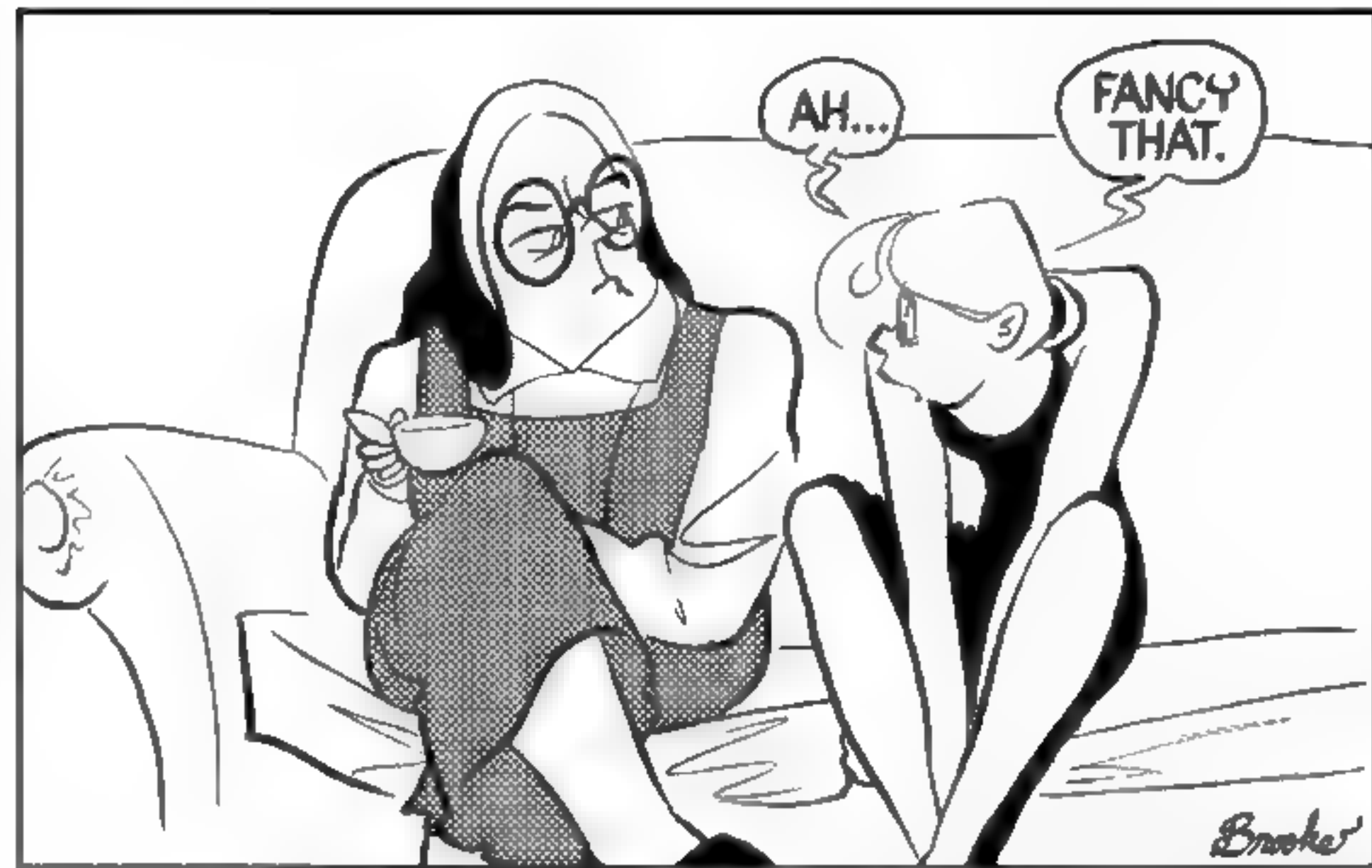
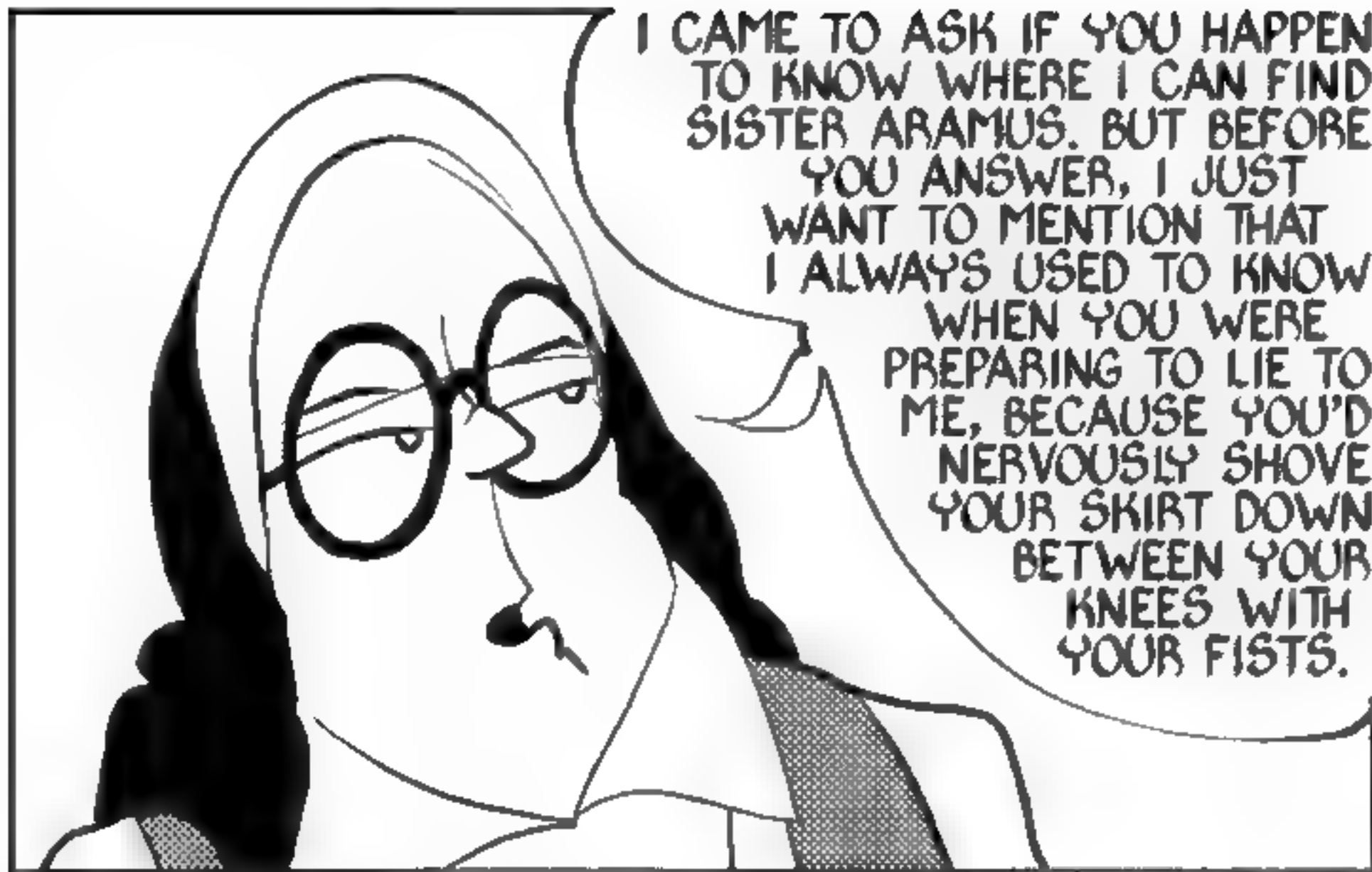
Brooke

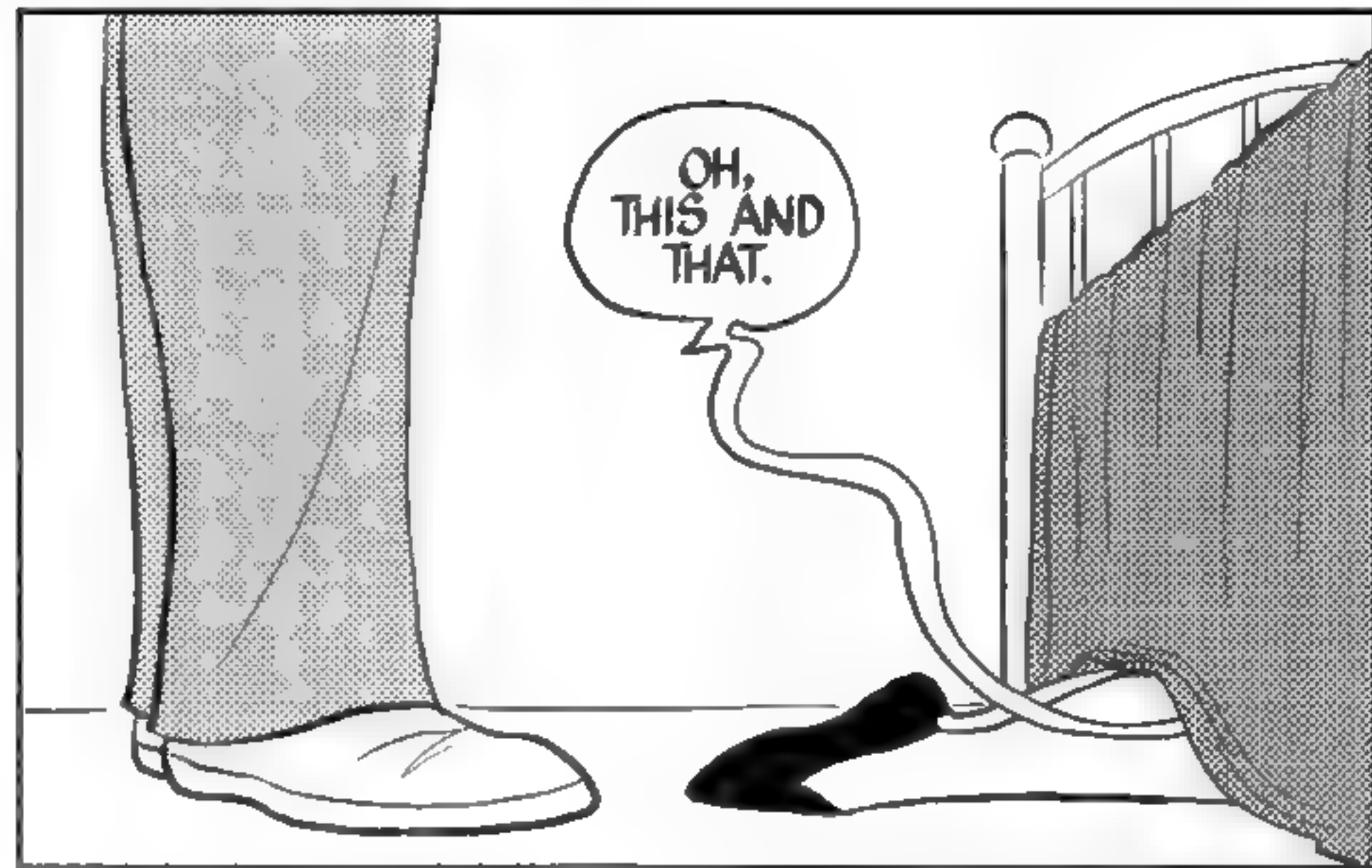
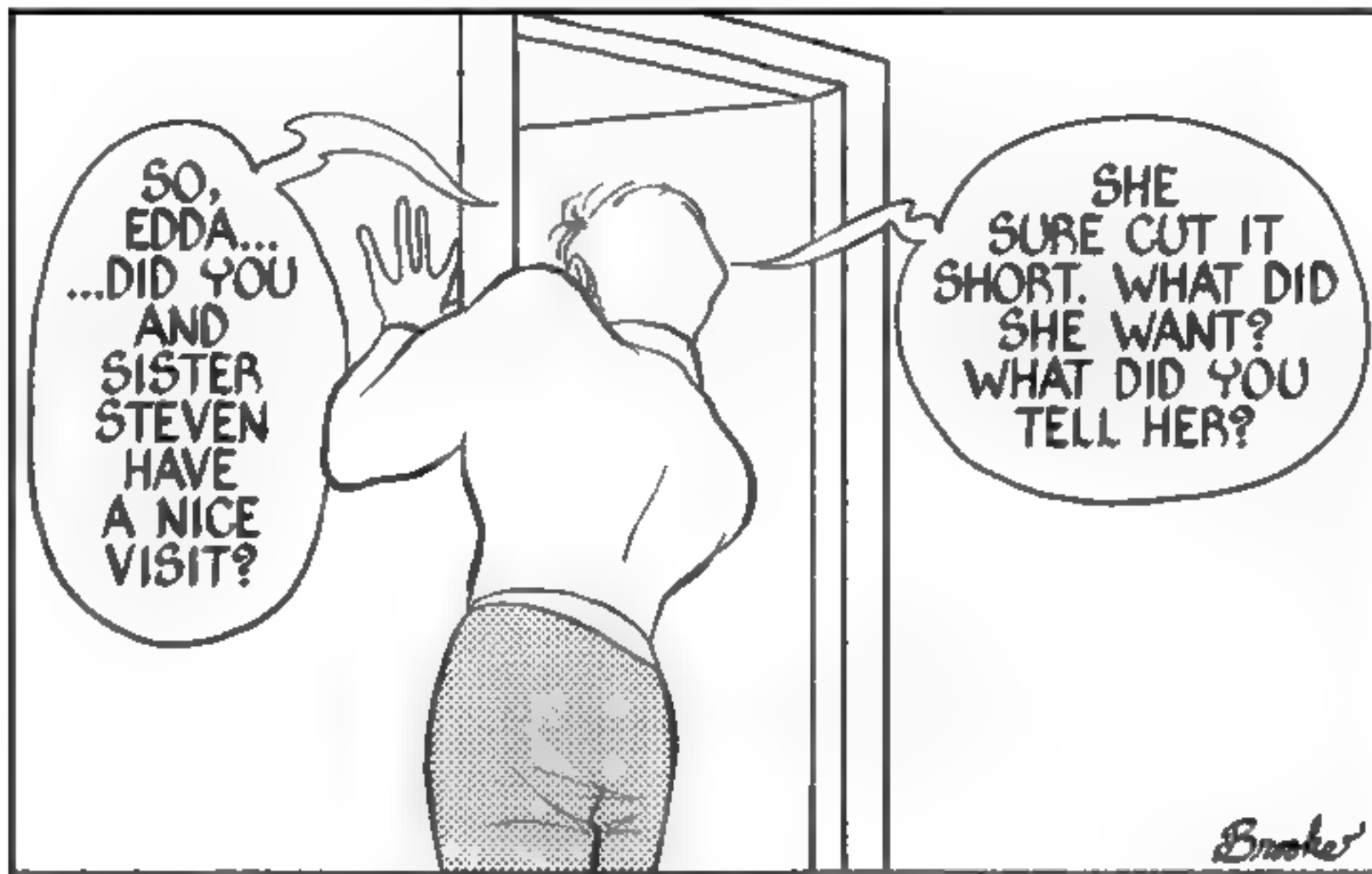


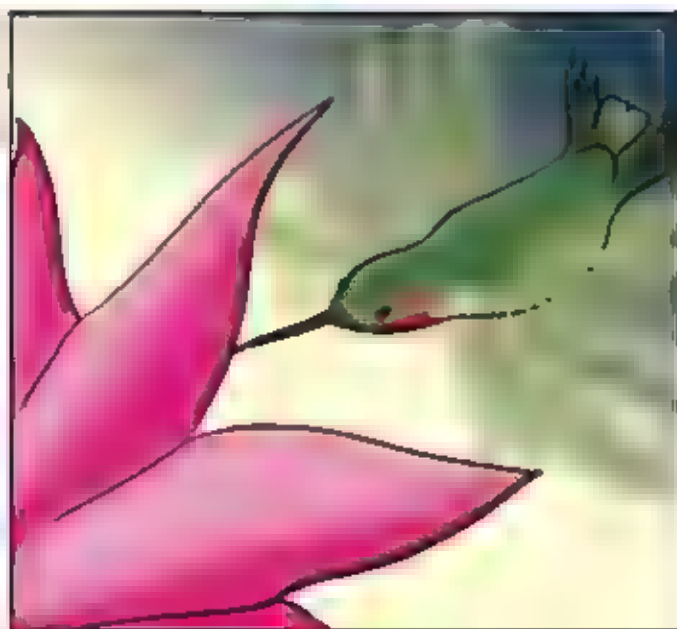
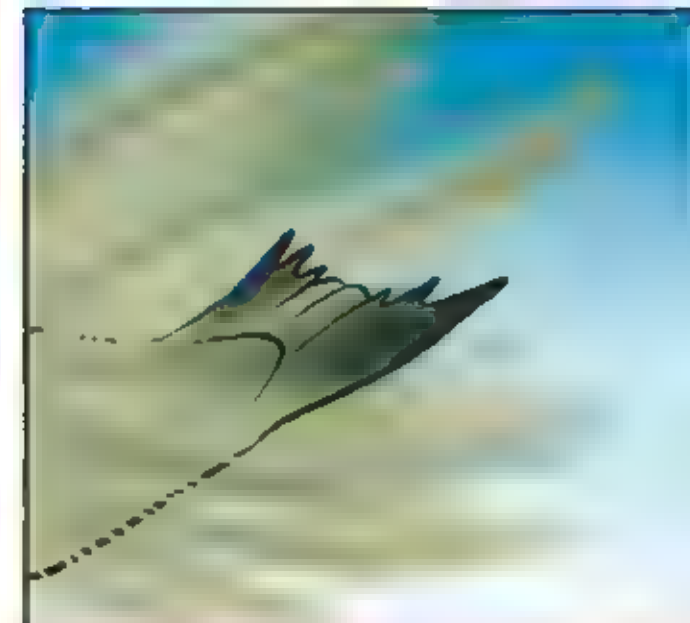
I'LL BEAT HER BACK WITH  
A BED SLAT...YOU KICK HER  
IN THE KIDNEYS.



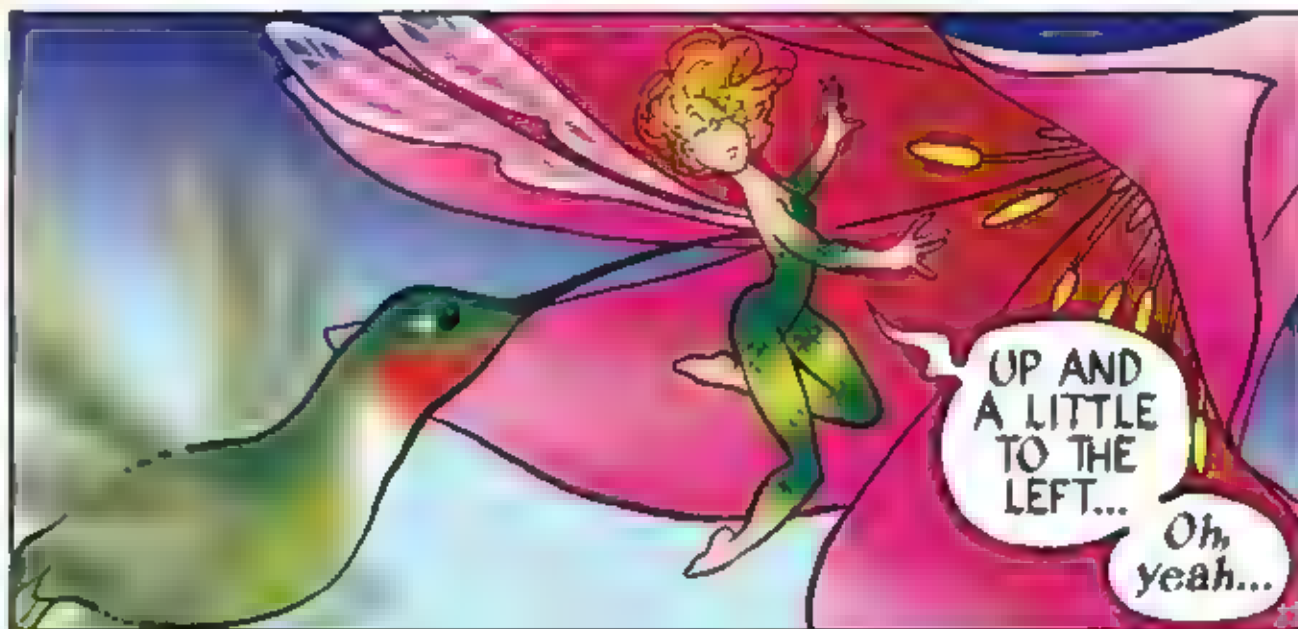








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EDDA WAS A LITTLE  
DAUNTED AT THE PROSPECT  
OF TALKING WITH HER OLD  
HEADMISTRESS, BUT IN THE  
END SHE KNEW JUST HOW  
TO HANDLE THE  
OLD LADY.



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WHERE  
IS  
EDDA  
NOW?



SHE SAID SHE  
WAS SKIPPING  
OUT FOR  
A WALK.  
...WHY?



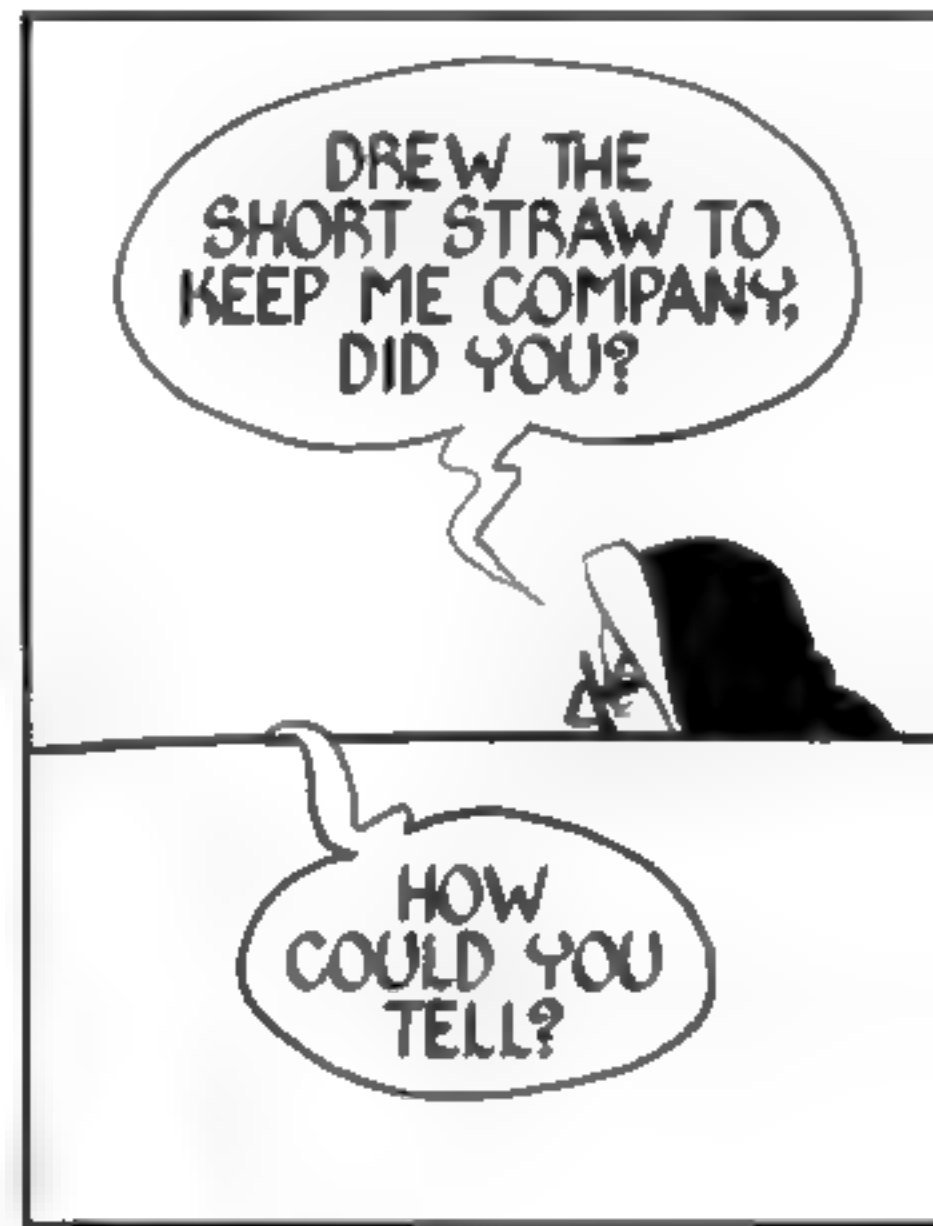
BEFORE I TELL YOU, I WANT YOU  
TO REPEAT MY MANTRA TEN TIMES -  
"WHAT WOULD BARBIE DO?"







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THE THING IS, I'VE GROWN  
BEYOND A PERCEPTION OF  
REALITY THROUGH  
CONVENTIONAL  
DOGMA. MY  
PERSONALITY  
IS TOO  
COMPLEX.



YOU ESPOUSE A  
SOPHOMORIC BLEND OF  
SCHOPENHAUER AND KANT,  
ALL WRAPPED UP IN  
KIERKEGAARD, AND  
EFFUSING A LITTLE  
WISP OF SARTRE.



YOU'RE  
NOWHERE  
NEAR THE  
MARK.



AND  
YOU  
PINCH.

MAN! SOMEBODY  
GET THIS WOMAN  
OUT OF MY HEAD!

Brooke

I CAN'T TALK TO THAT WOMAN ANYMORE. SHE'S LIKE YOUR MOTHER, BUT WITH LASER CANNON. FURTHER EXPOSURE AND I'LL COMPLETELY LOSE MY HARD-WON INGENUE LOOKS.



I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER MYSELF.



OKAY. ALL DONE. SHE'S MET HER MATCH.



*Brooke*

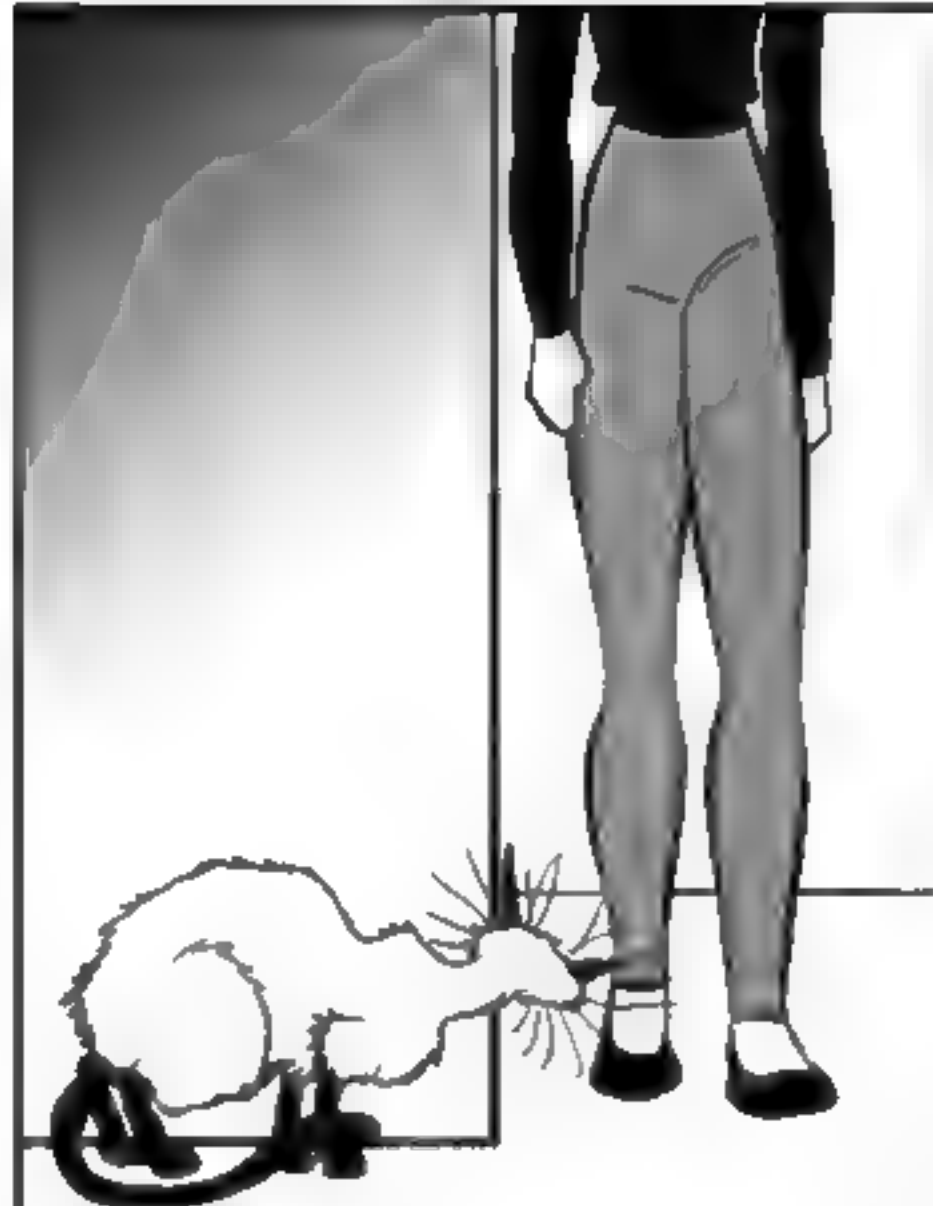
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HALLMARKS  
OF  
FELINITY

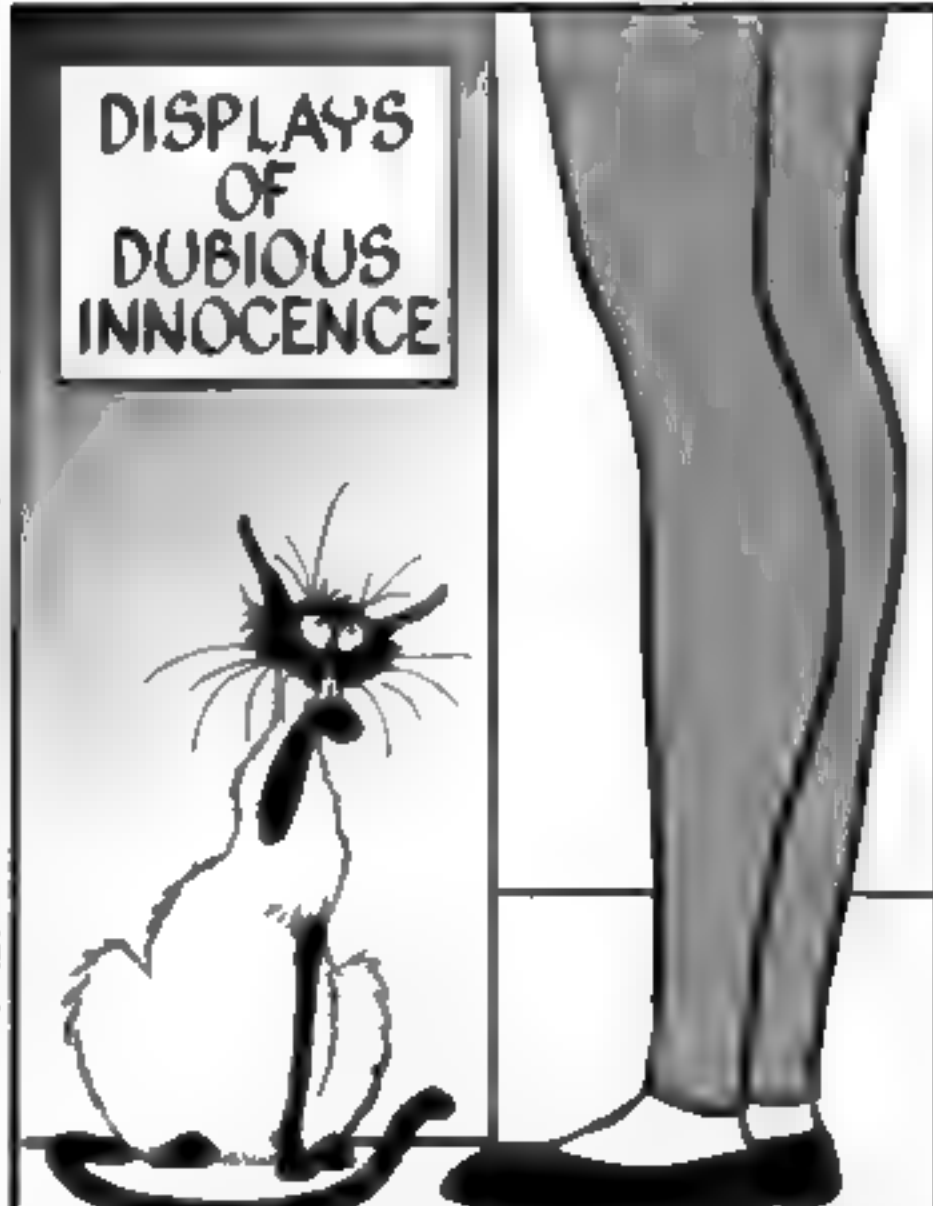


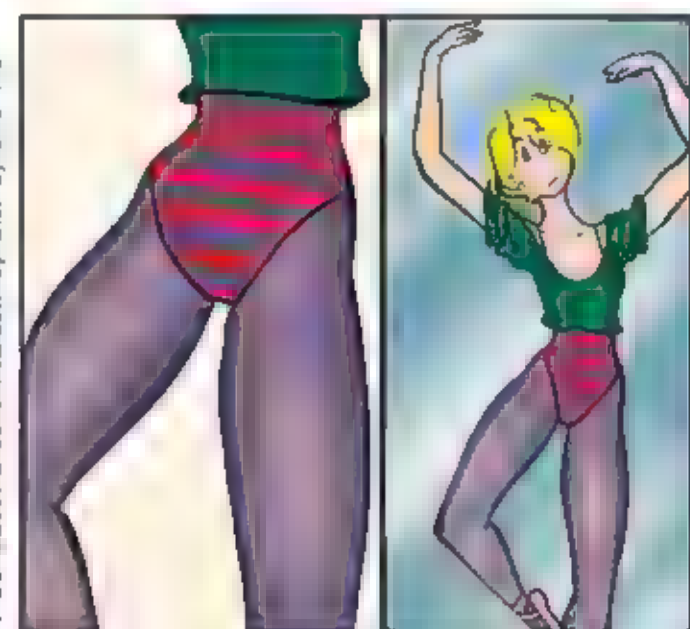
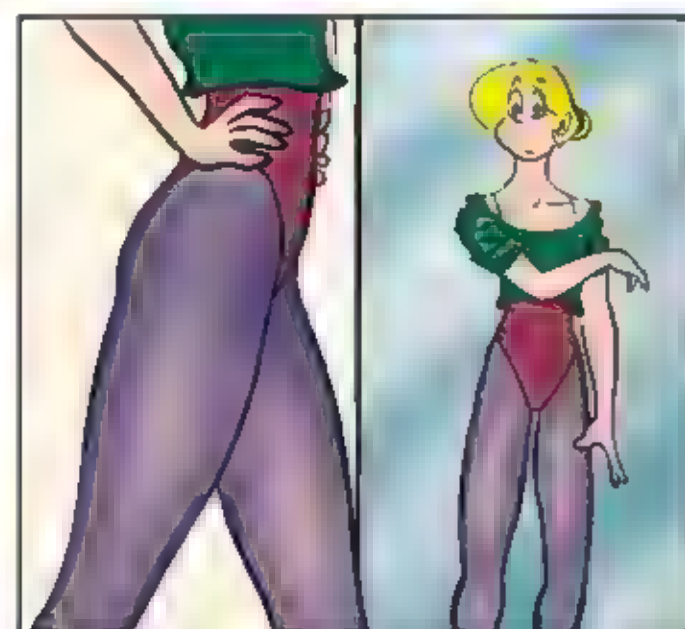
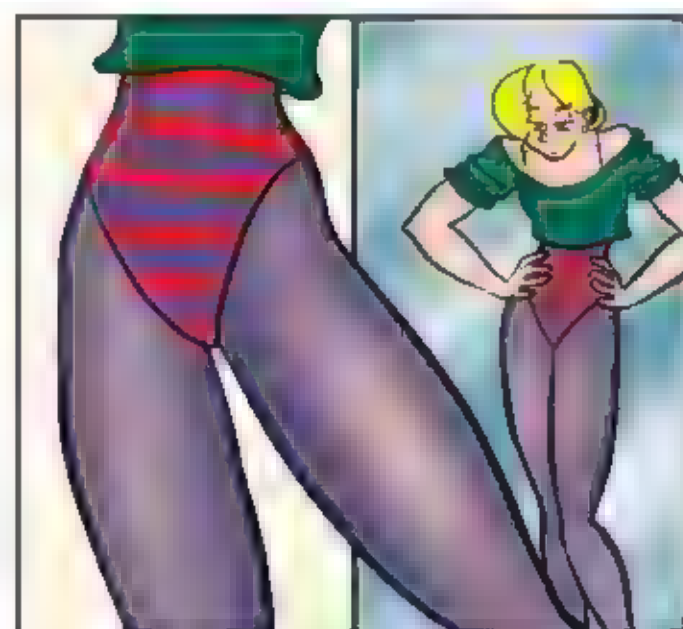
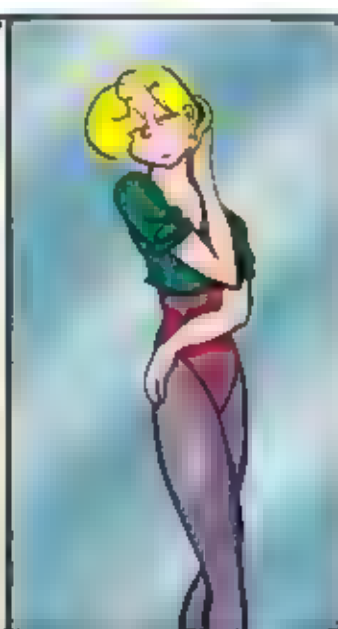
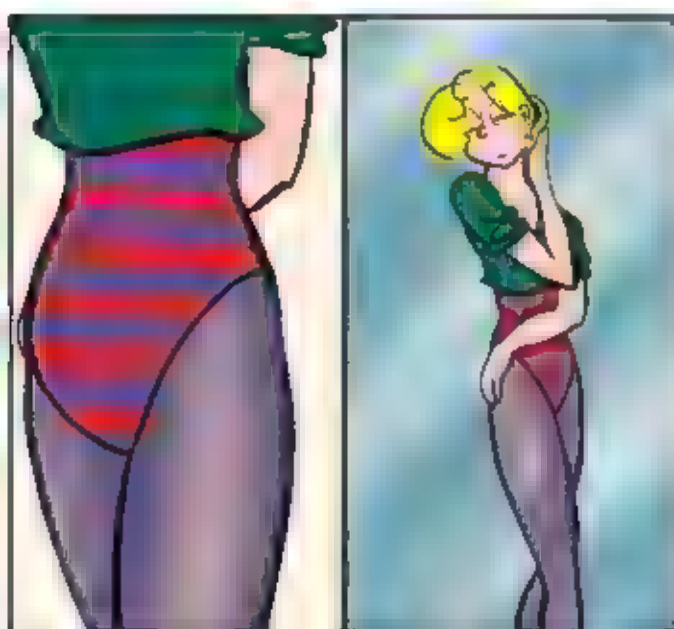
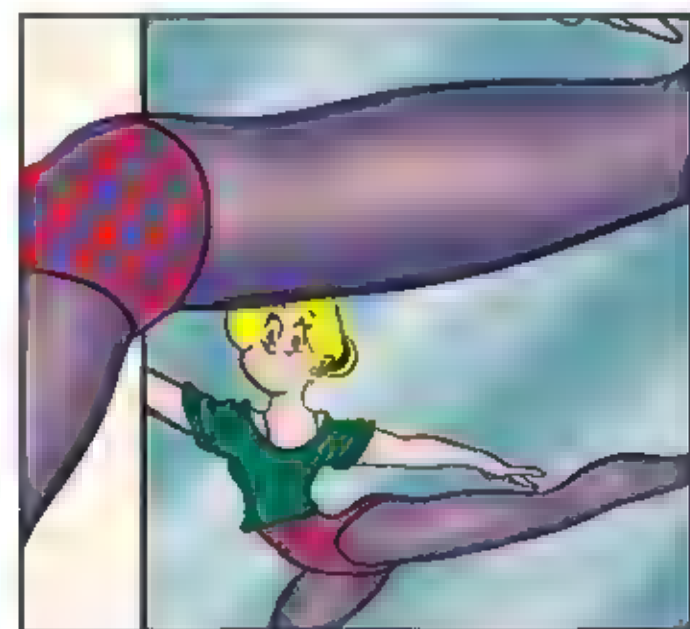
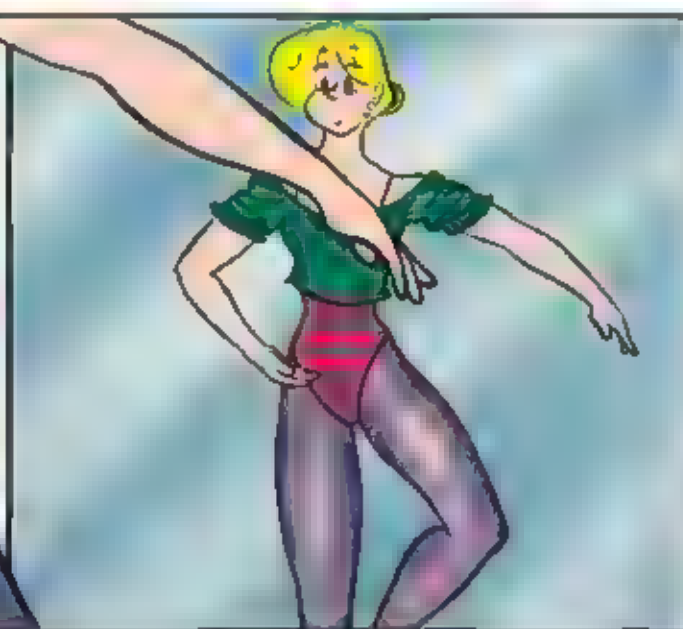
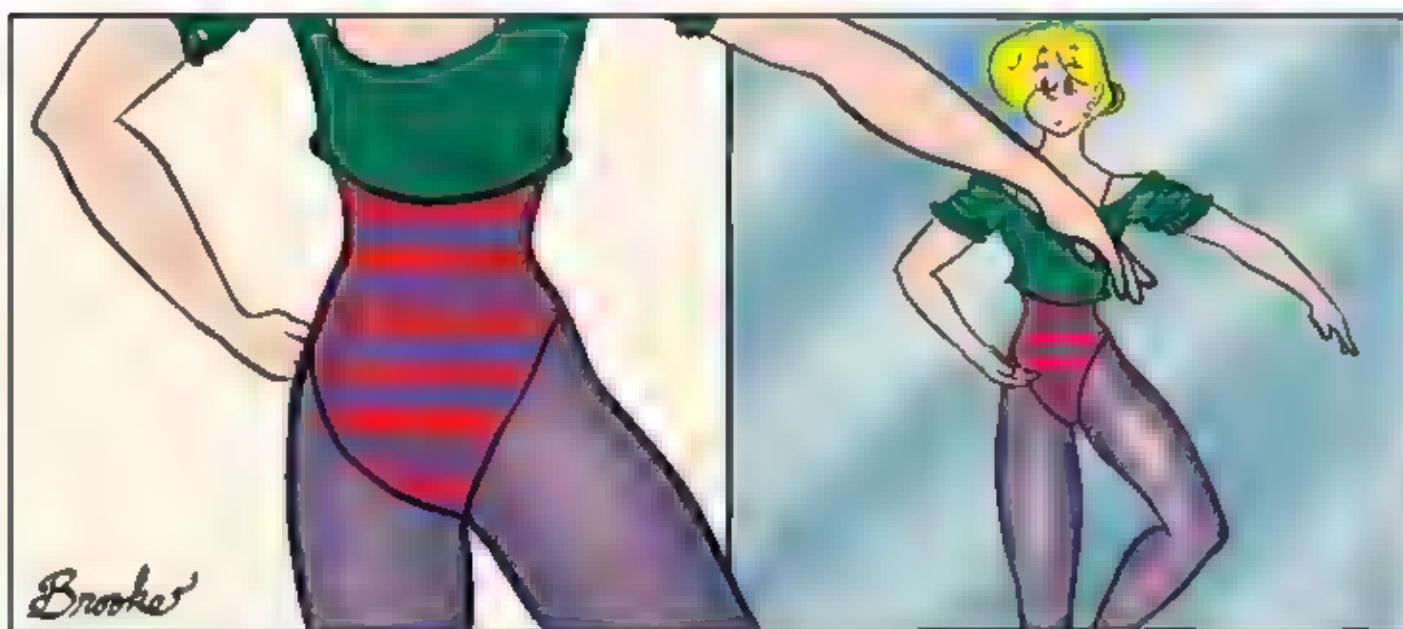
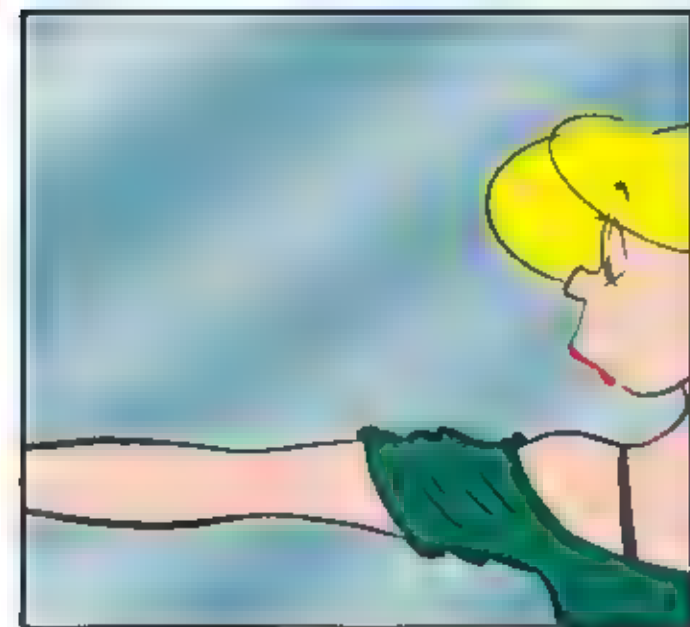
Brooke



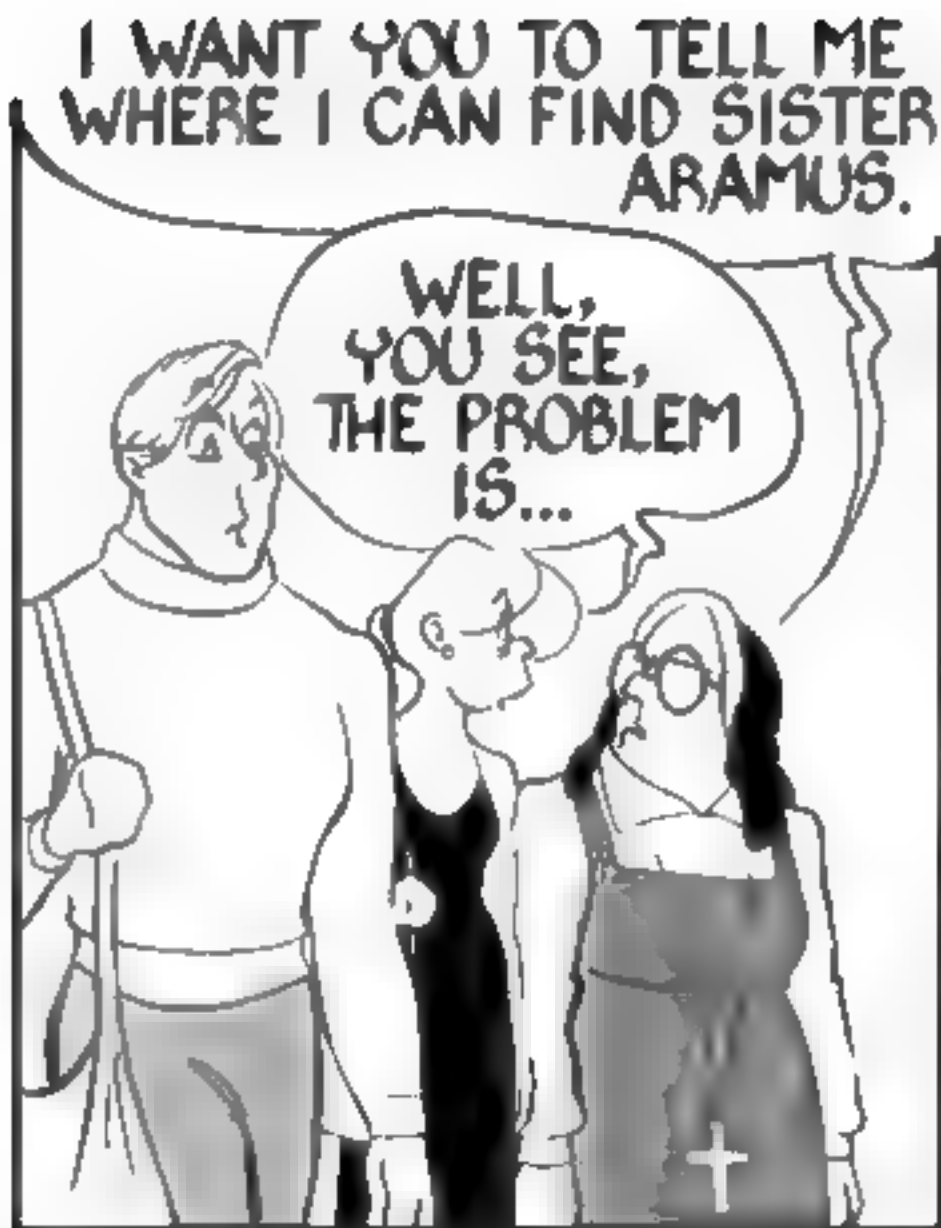
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DISPLAYS  
OF  
DUBIOUS  
INNOCENCE





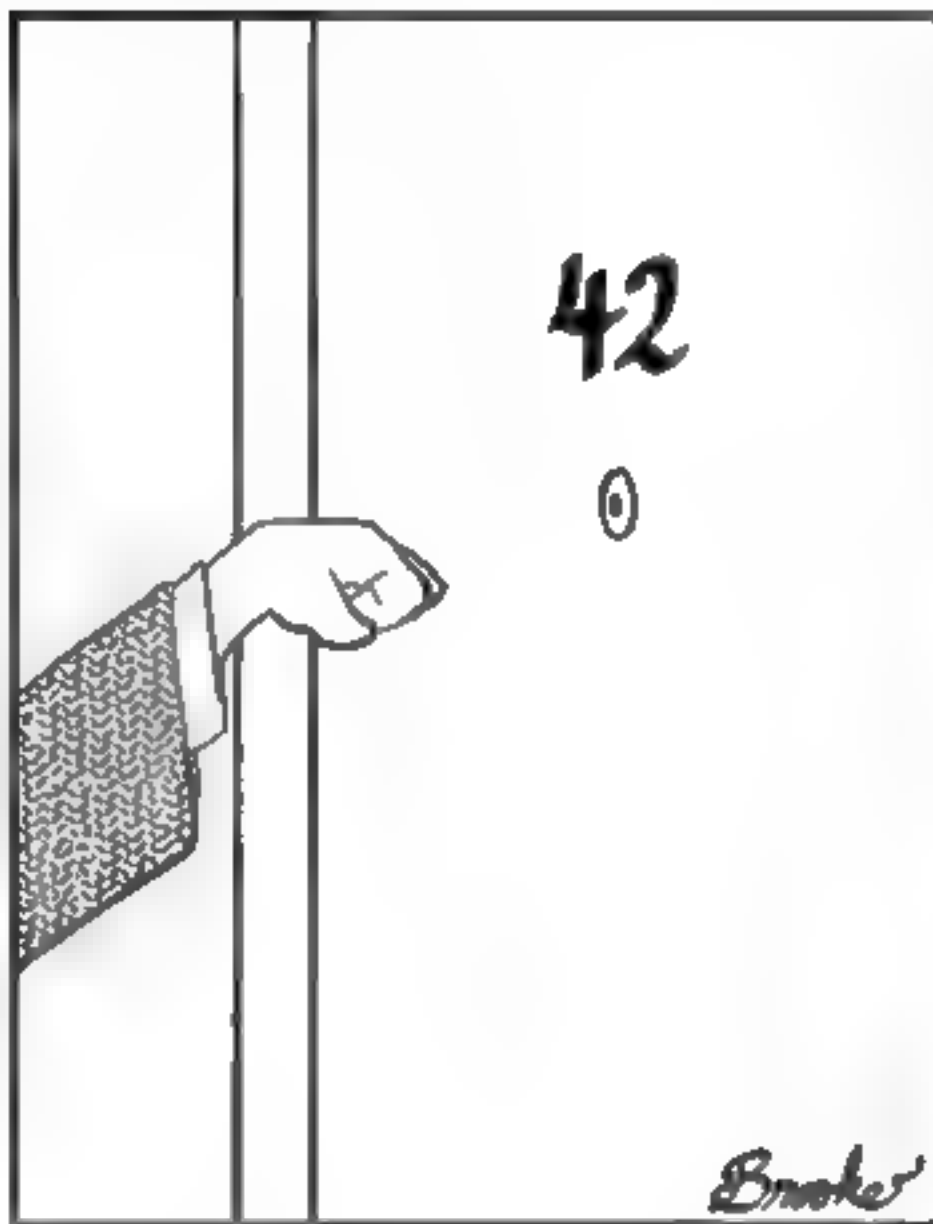




THIS WHOLE THING STARTED WHEN I ANSWERED THE DOOR. IF I HADN'T ANSWERED THE DOOR, I WOULDN'T BE STANDING HERE SAYING THIS ALL STARTED WHEN I ANSWERED THE DOOR. WHY DID I ANSWER THE DOOR?



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EDDA, WHERE'S DIANE!? I WANT TO FIND HER.



FATHER DURLY?



THIS IS SO ROMANTIC...  
...I'M GONNA BLUB.



SUCK IT UP, GUY!

I REALLY NEED TO BE PITHED.

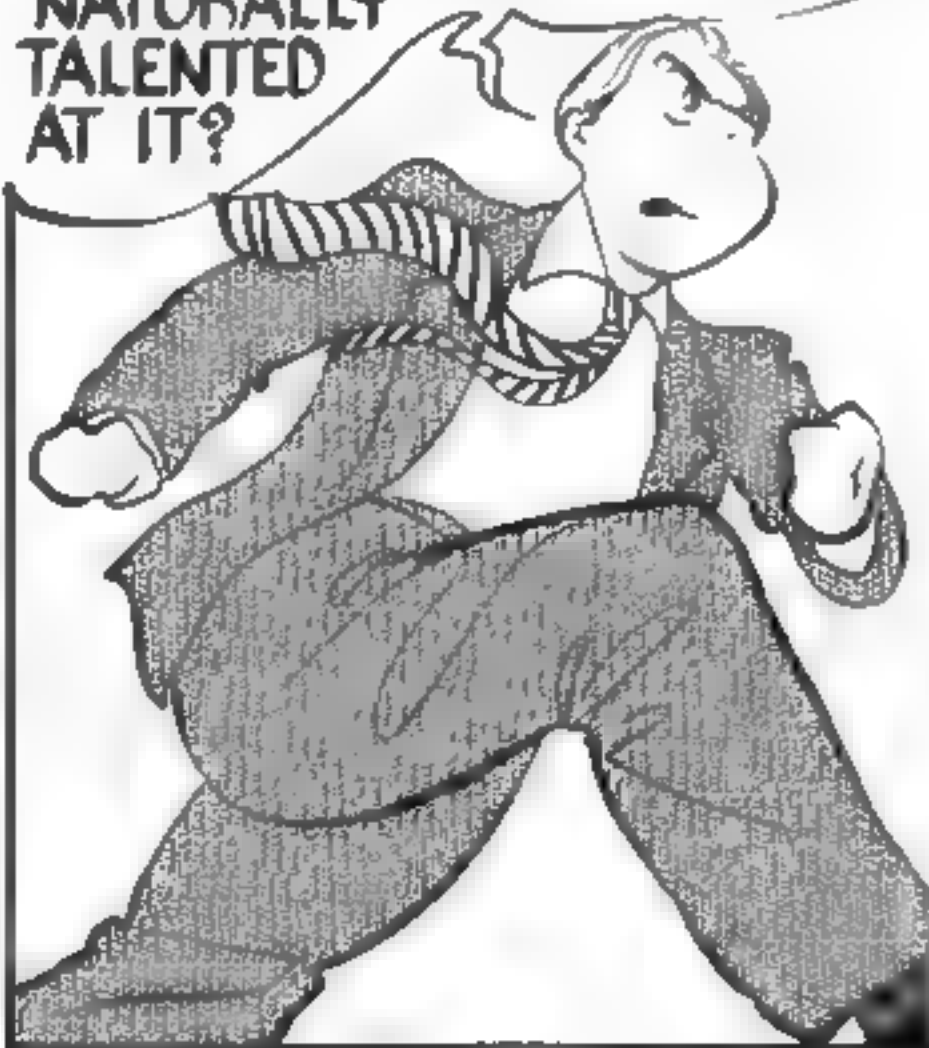


SISTER STEVEN CAME BY  
ASKING AFTER DIANE, AND  
I TOLD HER WHERE SHE'D  
FIND HER IN CENTRAL PARK.  
I DIDN'T KNOW...I DIDN'T  
MEAN TO...I DIDN'T THINK IT  
WOULD...



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DID YOU STUDY MEDDLING,  
EDDA, OR ARE YOU JUST  
NATURALLY  
TALENTED  
AT IT?



*Brooke*



DOES SHE  
DO THIS  
A LOT?

NEARLY ALL THE  
TIME...CHABLIS?



What  
have I  
done?



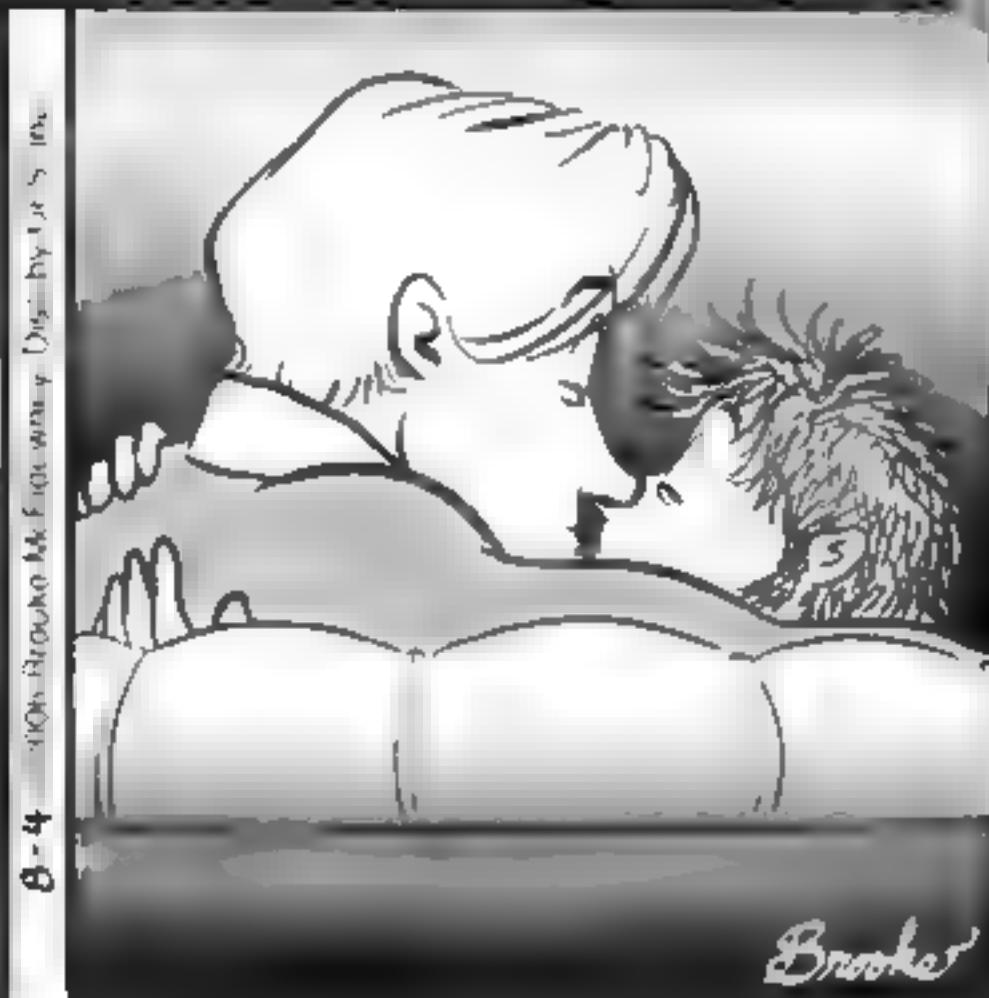
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*Brooke*



WITH FEWER THAN 71 HOURS REMAINING, WHAT, OF ALL THINGS, IN ALL THE WORLD, DO WE SEEK OUT?



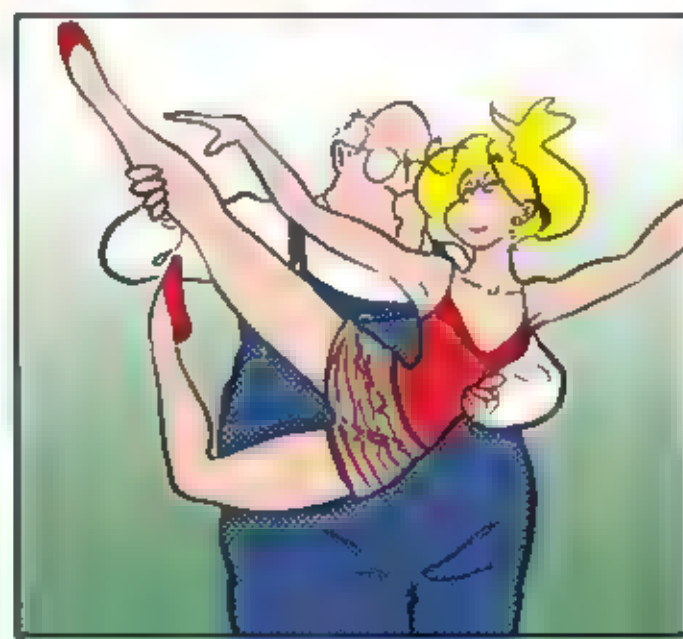
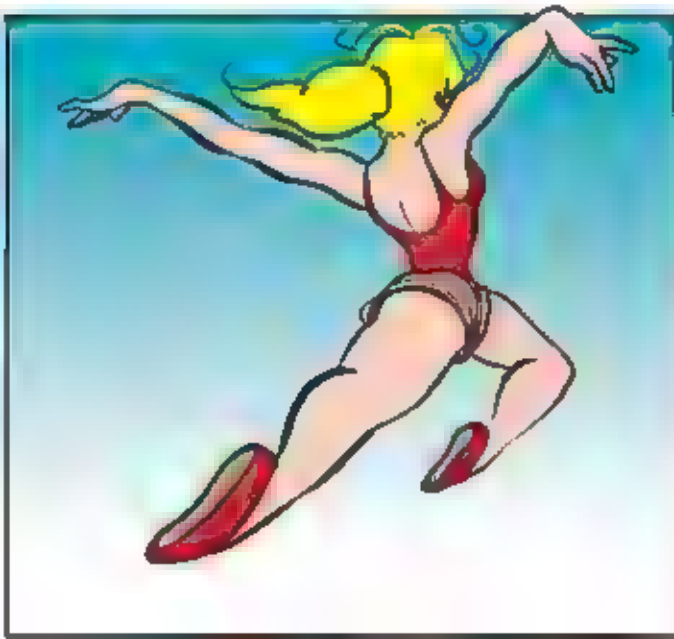
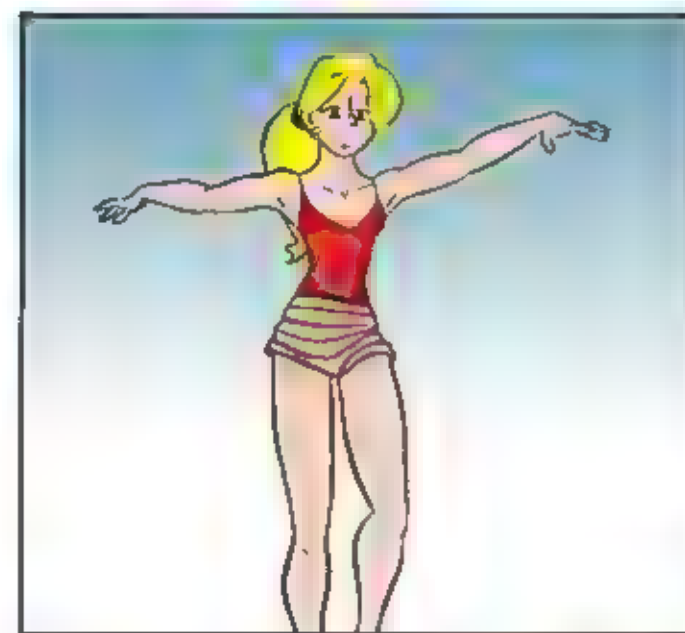
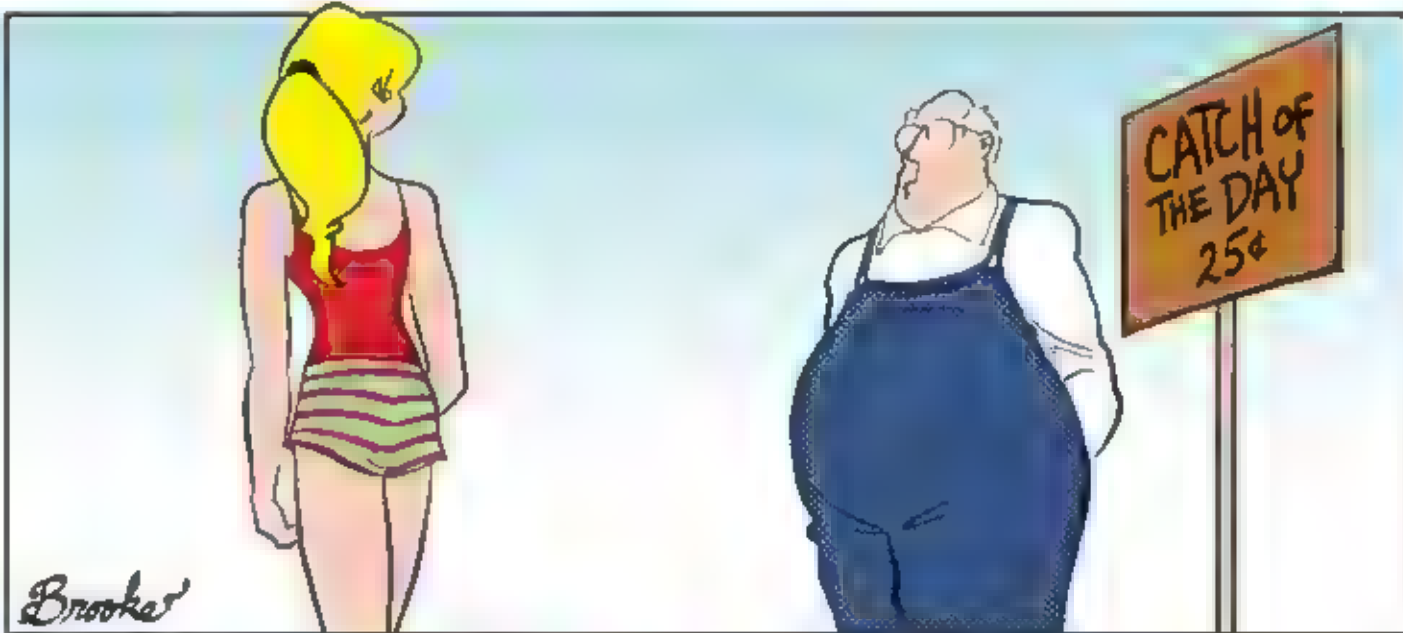
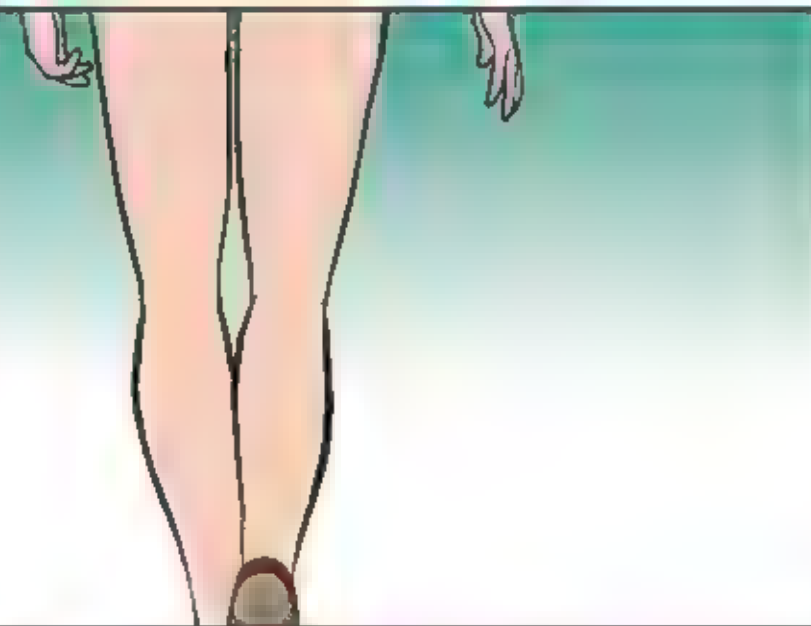




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# 9 CHICKWEED LANE<sup>®</sup>





87 Mike M. Endowsey Dist by UFS, Inc.



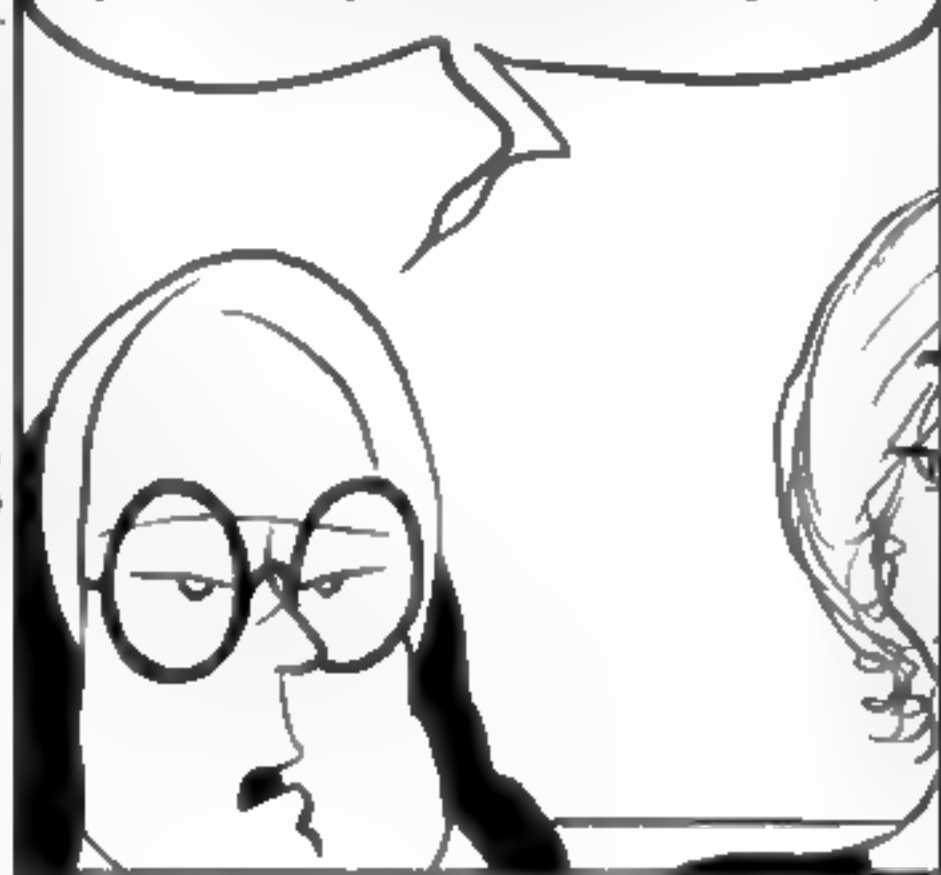
I'M AFRAID I BEHAVED  
RATHER SEVERELY WITH  
SISTER ARAMUS. I SAID  
HER DECISION WAS  
FOOLISH.



MAYBE  
SHE WAS  
ACTING OUT OF  
CONVICTION.

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I NEVER FEEL THAT  
FOOLISHNESS SWADDLED  
IN CONVICTION IS ANY  
LESS FOOLISH...  
ONLY MORE PERNICIOUS.



SOUNDS  
AS IF  
YOU TWO  
HAD A WARM  
FAREWELL.

I MAY HAVE  
NEGLECTED  
TO SAY  
GOODBYE.



Brooke



WHAT DID YOU WANT  
TO SAY TO SISTER  
ARAMUS? MAYBE  
I CAN PASS ON  
THE MESSAGE.

I WANTED  
TO SAY  
I'M SORRY  
WE PARTED  
AS WE  
DID.

THAT I MISS  
HER AND  
WORRY  
ABOUT HER.  
THERE ARE  
A LOT OF  
THINGS I'D  
LIKE TO SAY  
THAT ARE  
HARD  
TO SAY  
FACE  
TO FACE.

LIKE WHAT,  
FOR INSTANCE?



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WHEN I SEE  
HER, I'LL PASS  
IT ON.

*Brooke*



SISTER?...  
DO YOU THINK  
IT IS BAD TO  
ENGAGE IN  
A LITTLE  
MUTUAL  
DISHONESTY?

HOW  
MUTUAL?

JUST ENOUGH FOR TWO  
PEOPLE TO SEIZE UPON A  
MISUNDERSTANDING  
AND CLING  
TO IT?

IS THAT  
WHAT WE  
ARE DOING?

WHAT  
DO YOU  
THINK?

IS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE  
WAY TO AVOID AN ANSWER  
ACHIEVED BY SPEAKING  
EXCLUSIVELY IN  
QUESTIONS?

LOVELY  
DAY,  
ISN'T  
IT?

ISN'T  
IT,  
THOUGH?

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*Brooke*



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MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX:  
THEOLOGICAL  
PASTIMES —  
GUILT

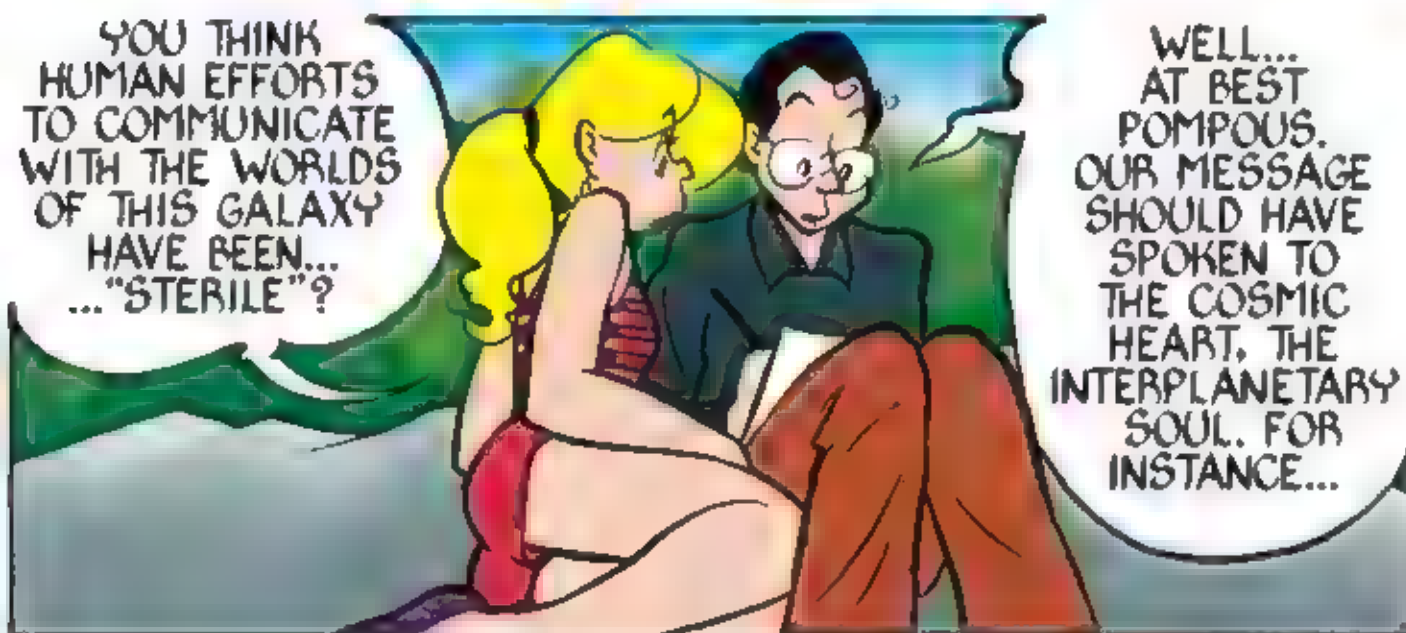


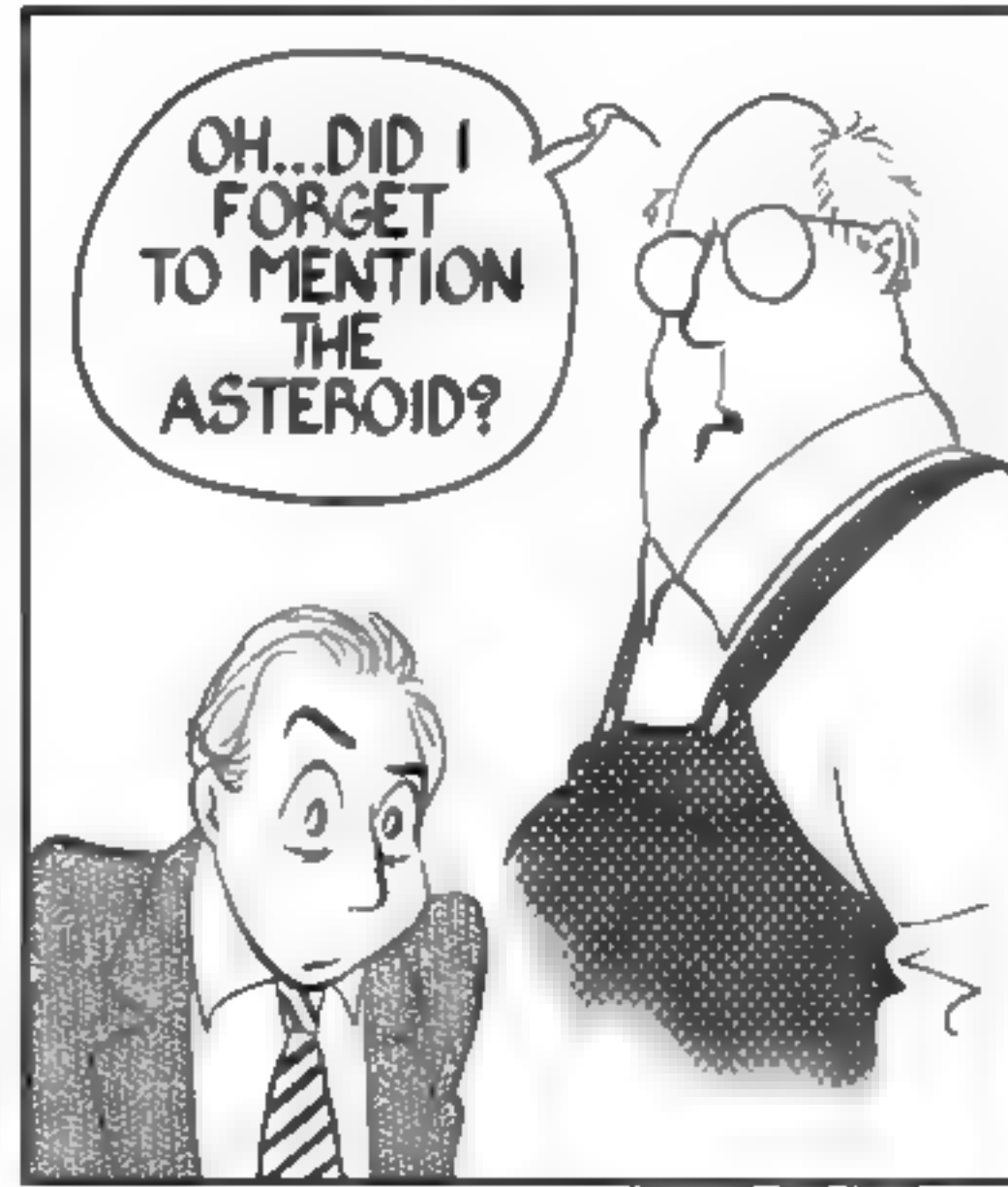
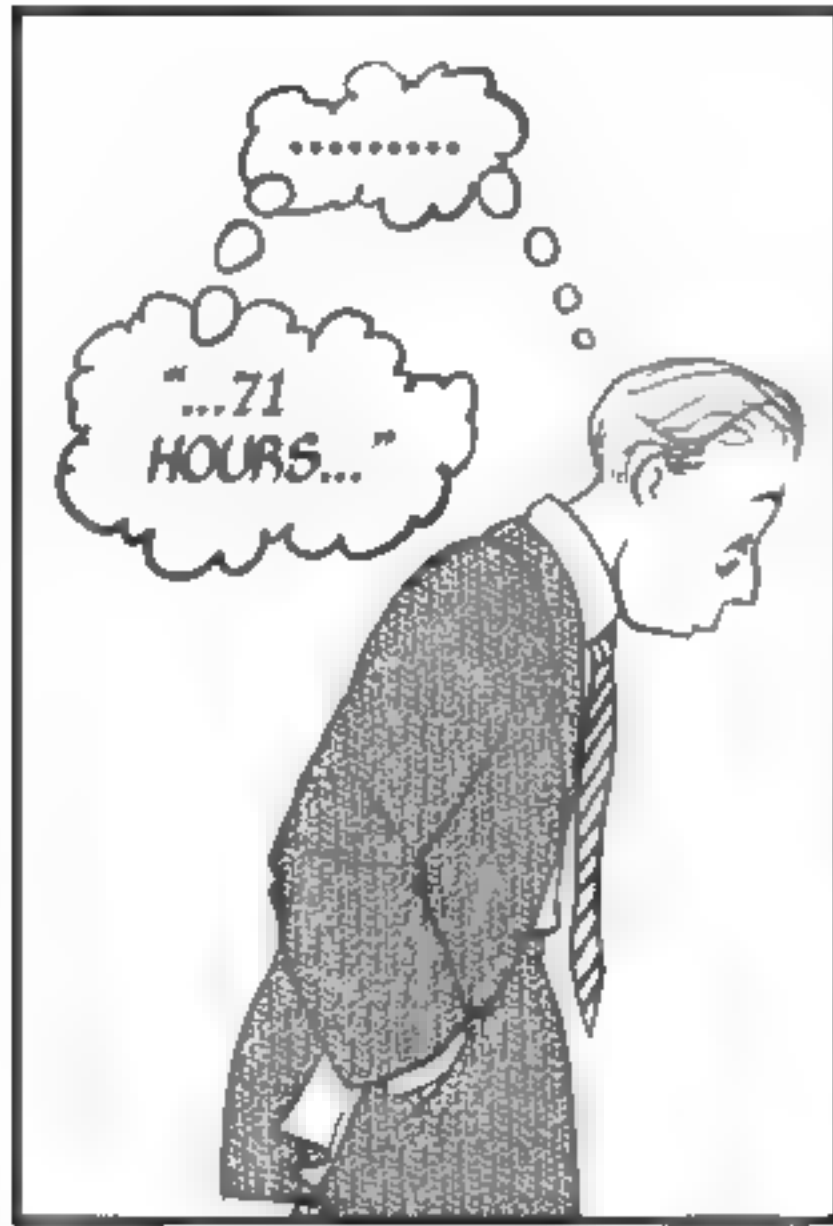
*Brooks*

GUILT IS  
THE TRAGIC  
DELUSION OF  
CULPABILITY  
WITHOUT THE  
COMIC RELIEF  
OF SIN.

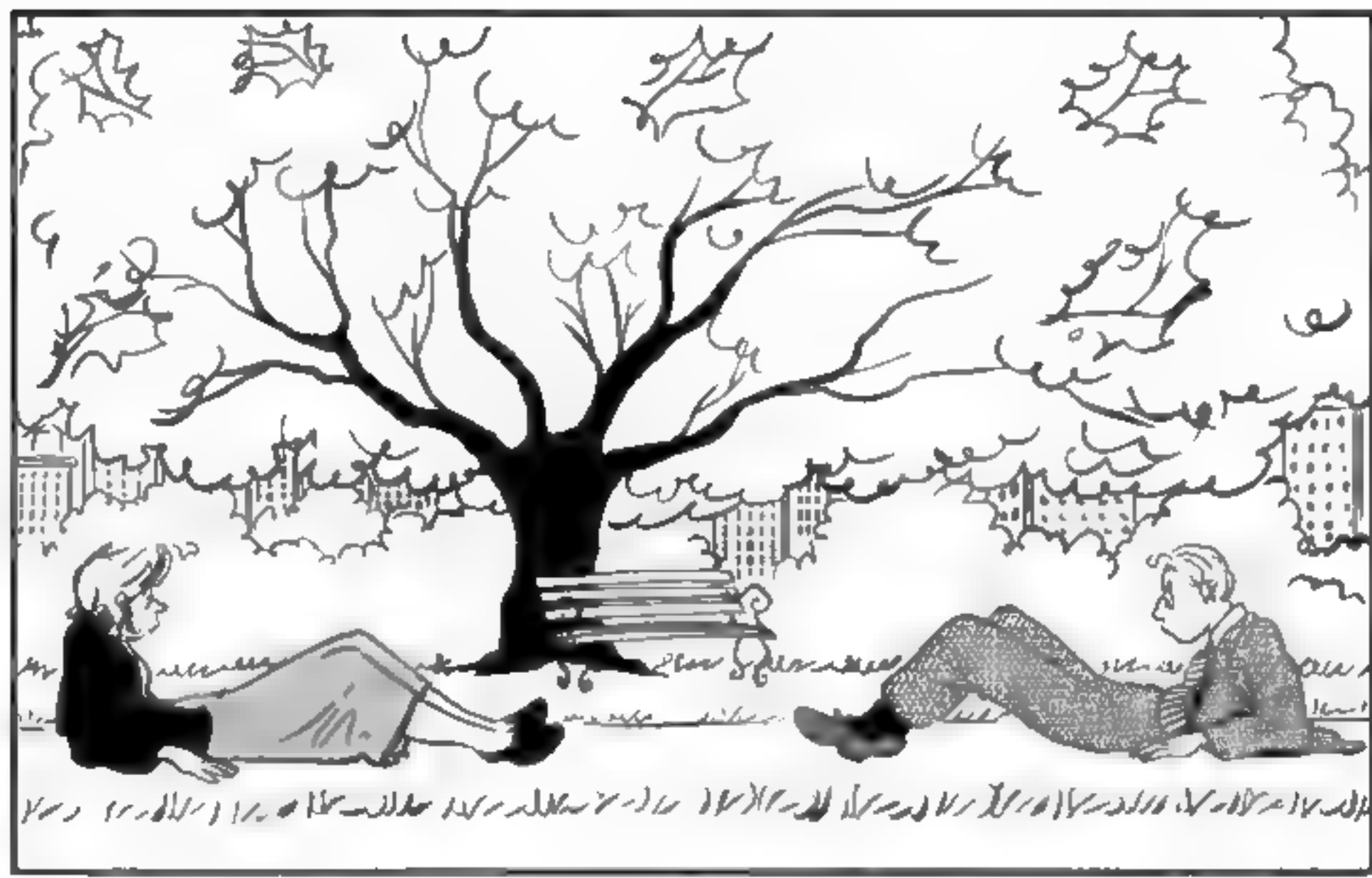
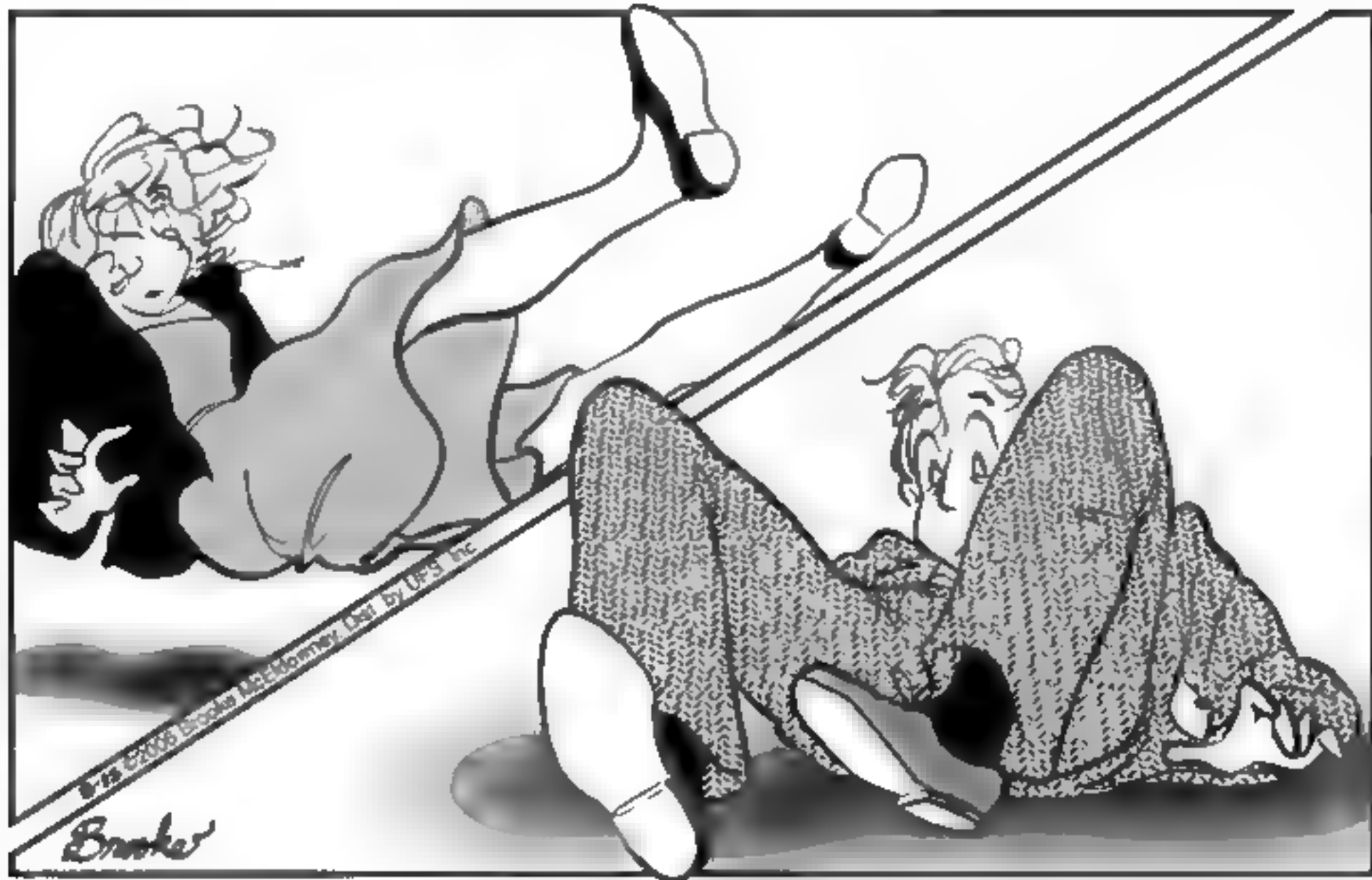












WE'VE GOT TO SAY SOME-  
THING! WE CAN'T JUST LIE  
HERE STARING AT EACH  
OTHER. PLEASE SAY  
SOMETHING! I CAN'T  
THINK OF EVEN  
A SYLLABLE!



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I THINK  
MY NOSE IS  
BLEEDING.

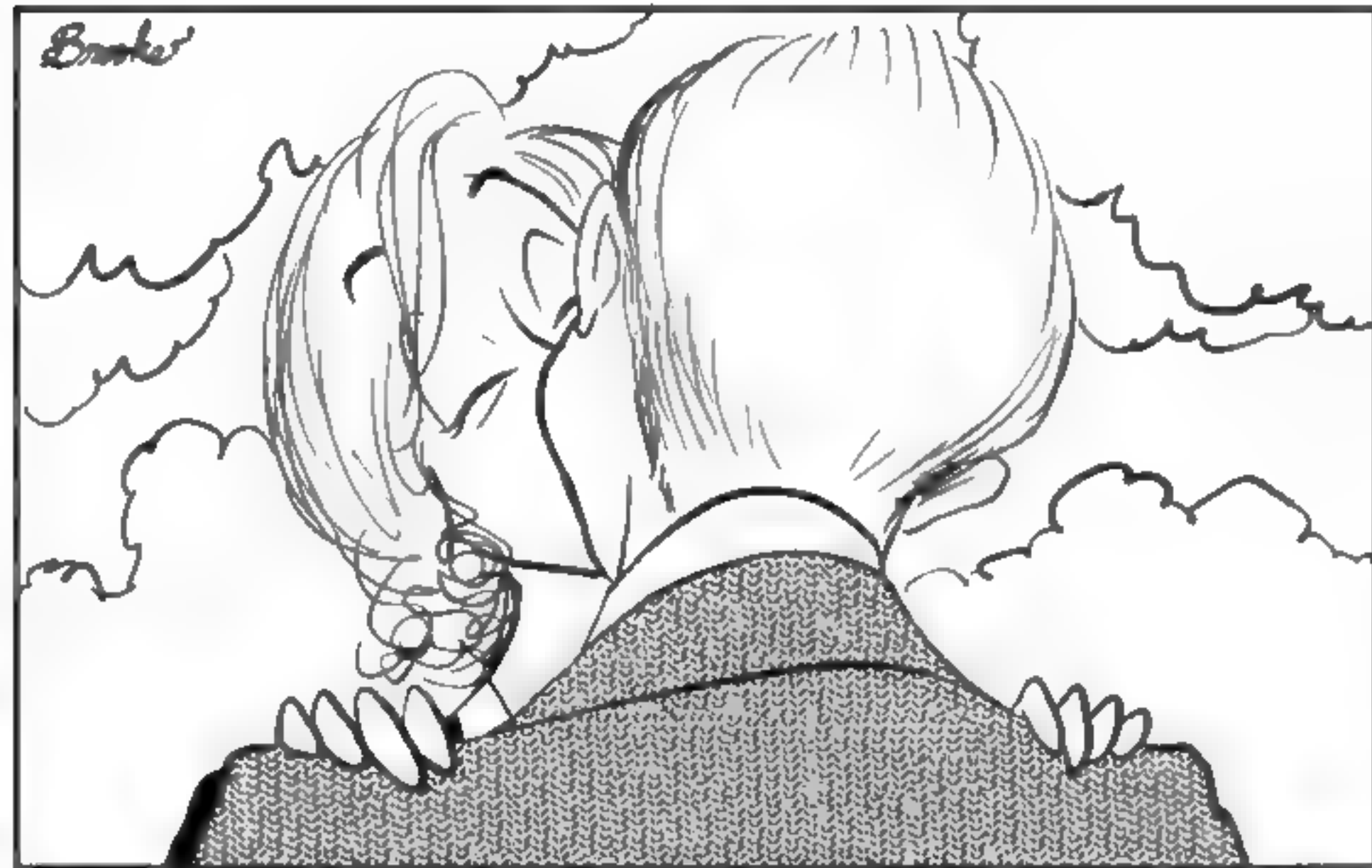


VERY  
SMOOTH.



Brooks





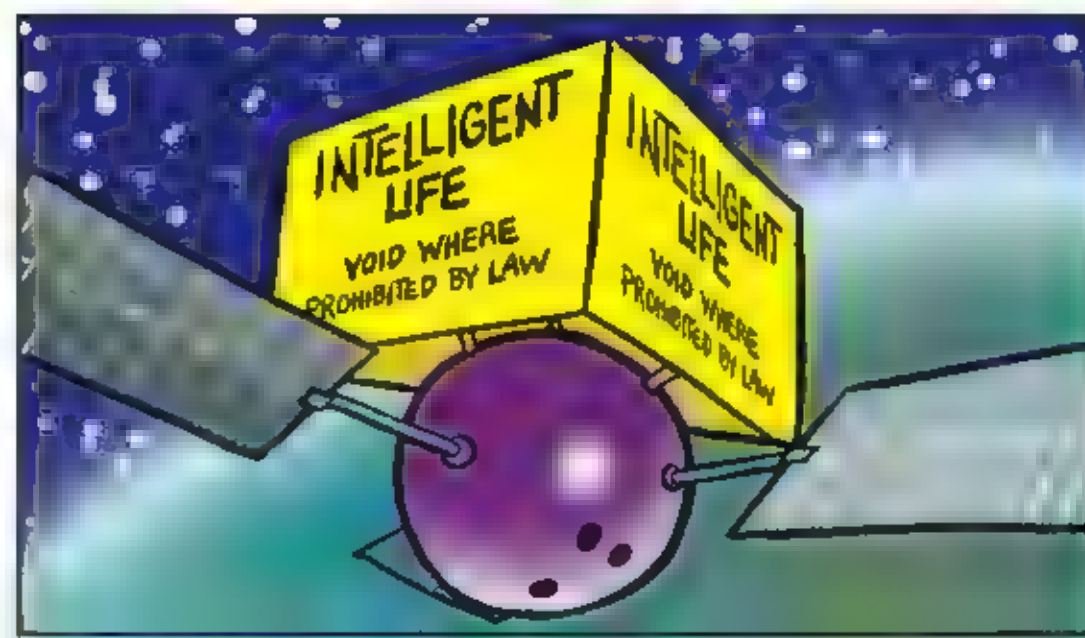
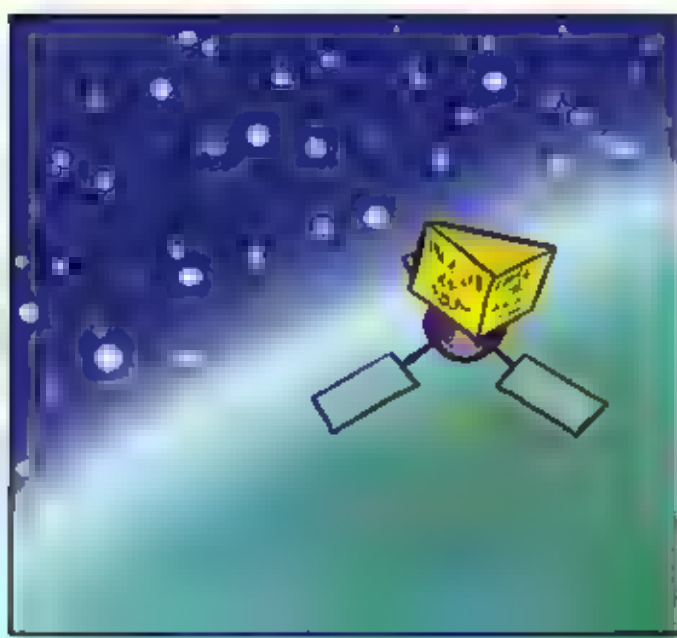
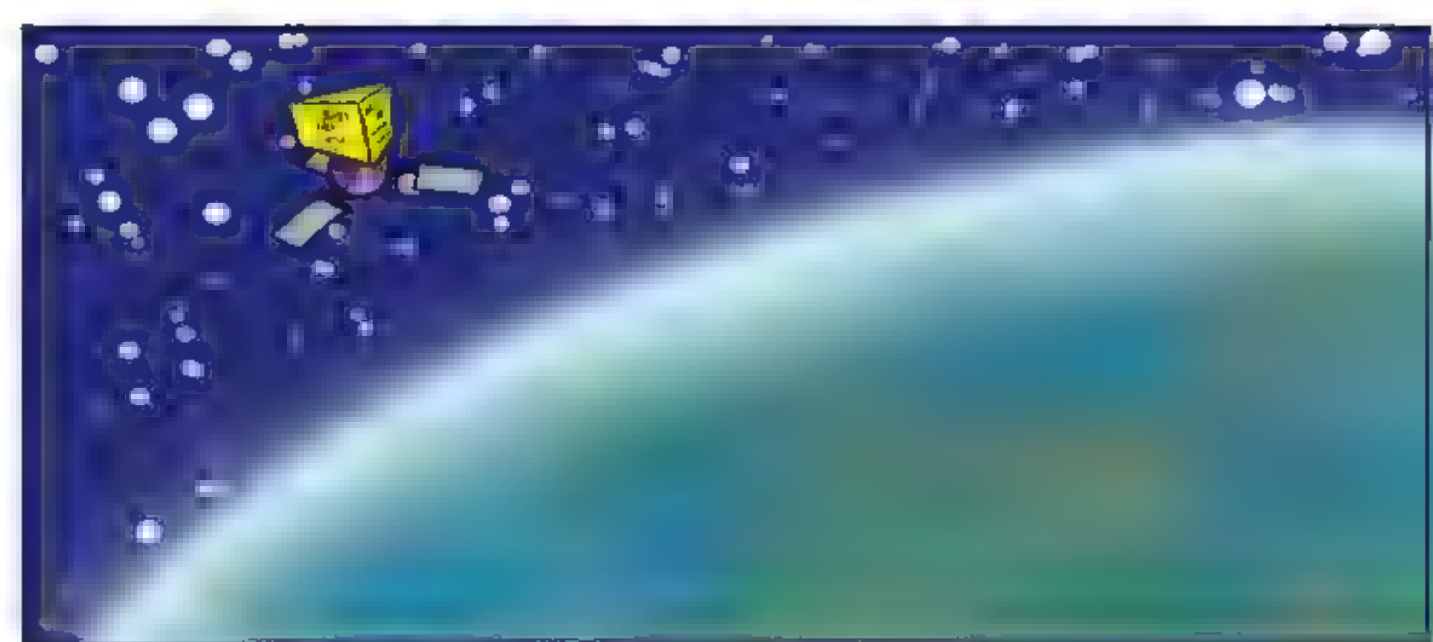
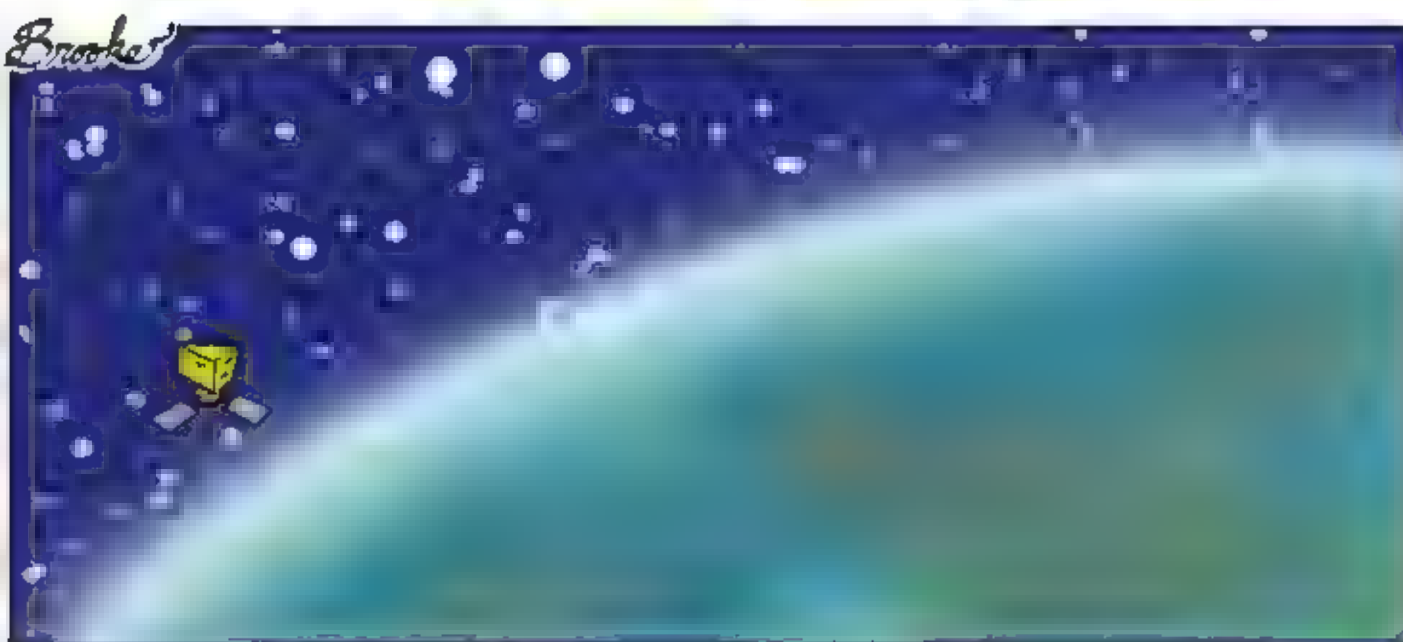




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WHERE WERE  
YOU WALKING  
WHEN I RAN  
INTO YOU?

NOWHERE.  
JUST  
AWAY.

WHEN I SAW YOU WITH  
SISTER STEVEN, I FIGURED  
SHE'D DRAG YOU BACK  
TO YOUR ORDER. I THOUGHT  
I'D LOST, AND WITHDREW.

THEN I REGROUPED.  
I DECIDED I WASN'T  
GIVING UP WITHOUT A...

WAIT  
A MINUTE!

WHAT  
DO YOU MEAN,  
DRAG ME **BACK**  
TO MY ORDER?



BUT THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT! IT JUST HAPPENED!

LEADING ME ON FOR MONTHS, TELLING ME YOU WERE SISTER ARAMUS' NIECE... ...THAT "JUST HAPPENED"?



Brooke

YOUR HAIR GREW FOUR INCHES WHILE THAT "JUST HAPPENED."

WELL, IF YOU KNEW, WHY DID YOU COME BACK AT ALL?



BECAUSE I REALIZED THAT I LOVE YOU WHOEVER YOU ARE AND THAT IF I HAD ONLY 71 HOURS REMAINING I'D WANT TO BE WITH YOU AND TELL YOU HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU WHICH IS TO AN IMMEASURABLE DEGREE BUT I'D SPEND MY LAST 71 HOURS TRYING TO MEASURE IT ANYWAY!

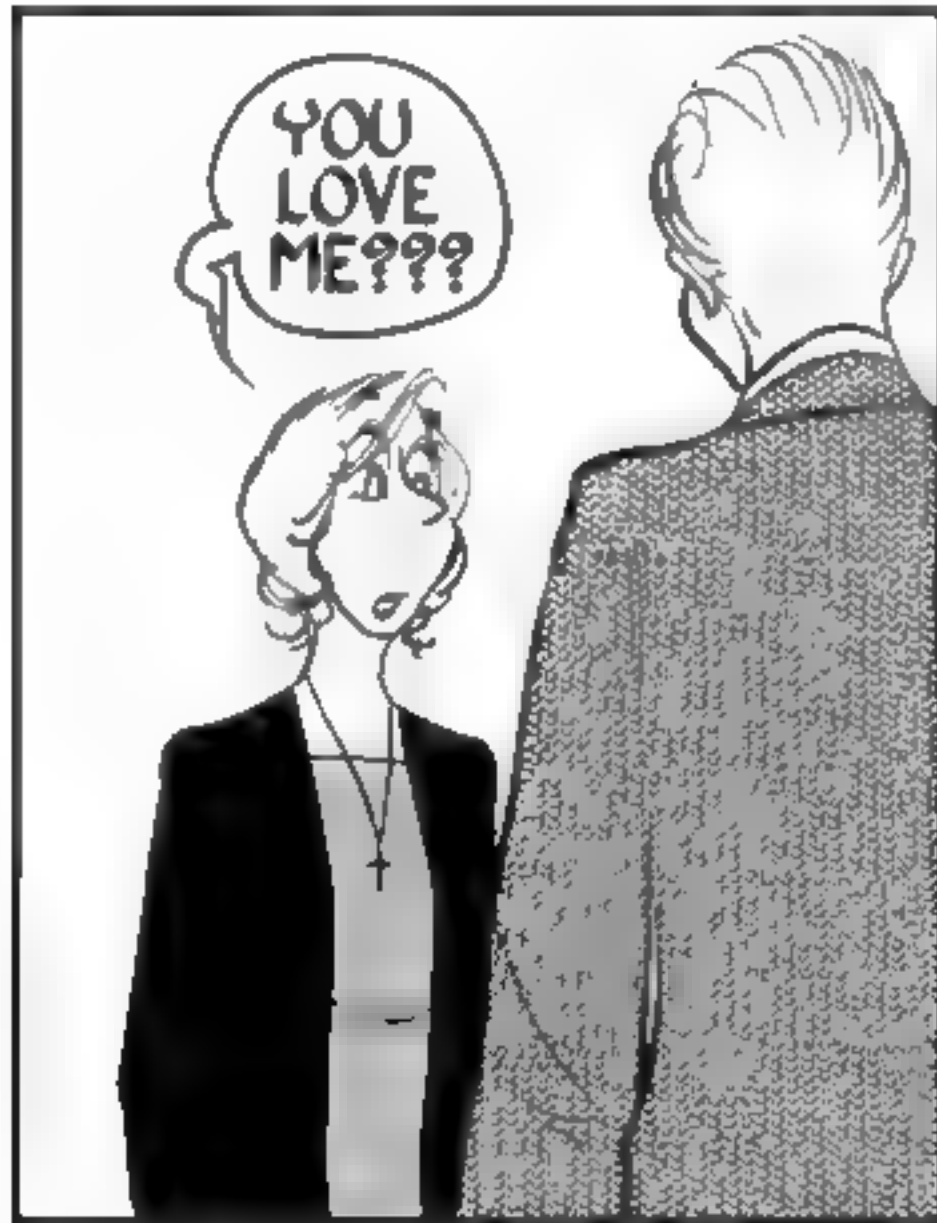


WHAT WAS THAT!?

HIS SENTENCE JUST BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER.







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YOU ALLOWED AN INSANE  
FARMER AND HIS MARCH  
HARE TO TALK YOU OUT  
OF THE PRIESTHOOD?!



MONTY  
IS NOT THE  
MARCH  
HARE.

CHESHIRE  
CAT, THEN.



MONTY IS GOD!  
HIS FRIENDS JUST  
CALL HIM MONTY.



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HE'S  
LOSING  
GROUND.

SHE'S  
EDGING  
AWAY  
FROM  
HIM.



Brooke

I ALWAYS  
FELT YOU  
WERE A MAN  
OF YOUR  
BELIEFS.  
NOW YOU  
JUST SOUND  
INSANE.

I DIDN'T  
HOLD MY  
BELIEFS.  
MY BELIEFS  
HELD ME.  
YOU TELL  
ME WHICH  
IS INSANE.

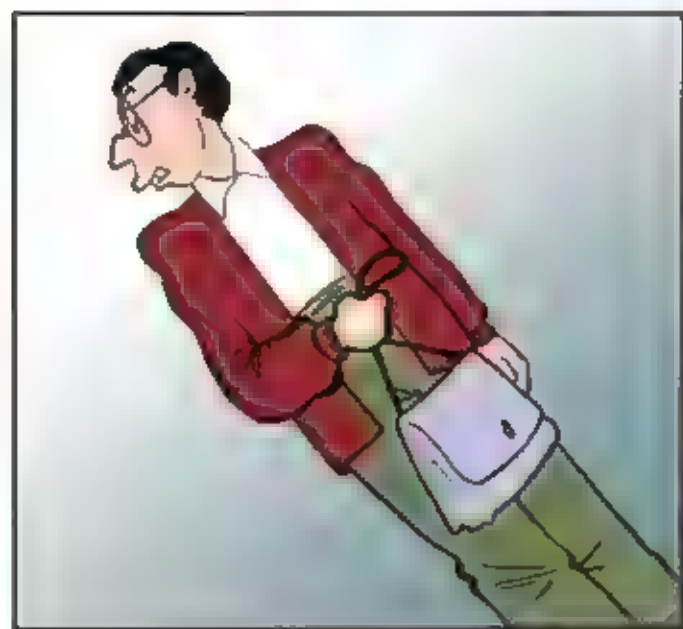
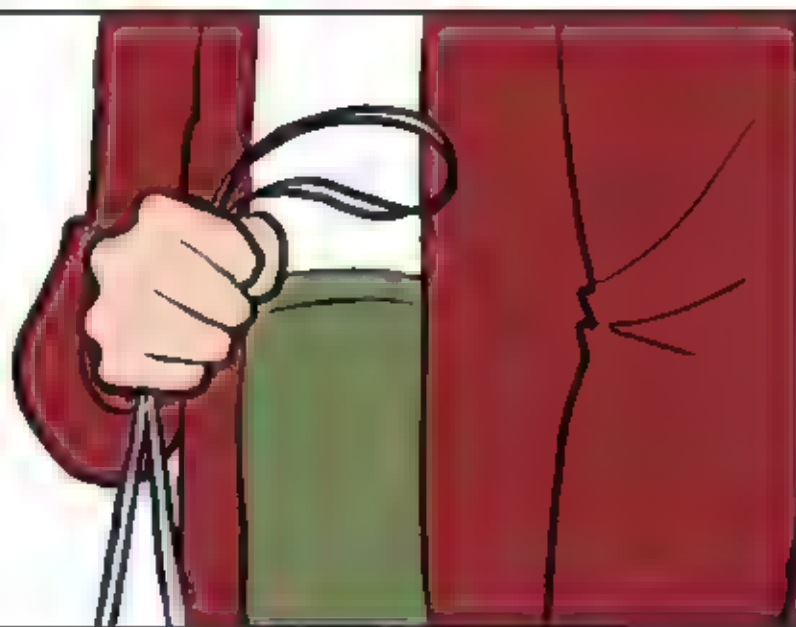
YOU'RE  
NOT THE  
MAN I MET  
TWO YEARS  
AGO!

AND  
YOU'RE NOT  
THE WOMAN.  
...OR EVEN  
THE NIECE OF  
THE WOMAN!

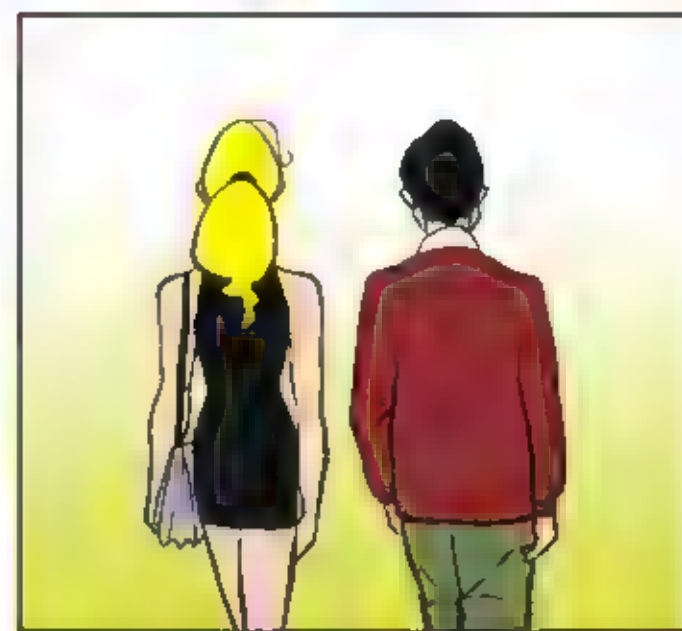
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OKAY...  
...KNOCK IT  
OFF!

Brooke



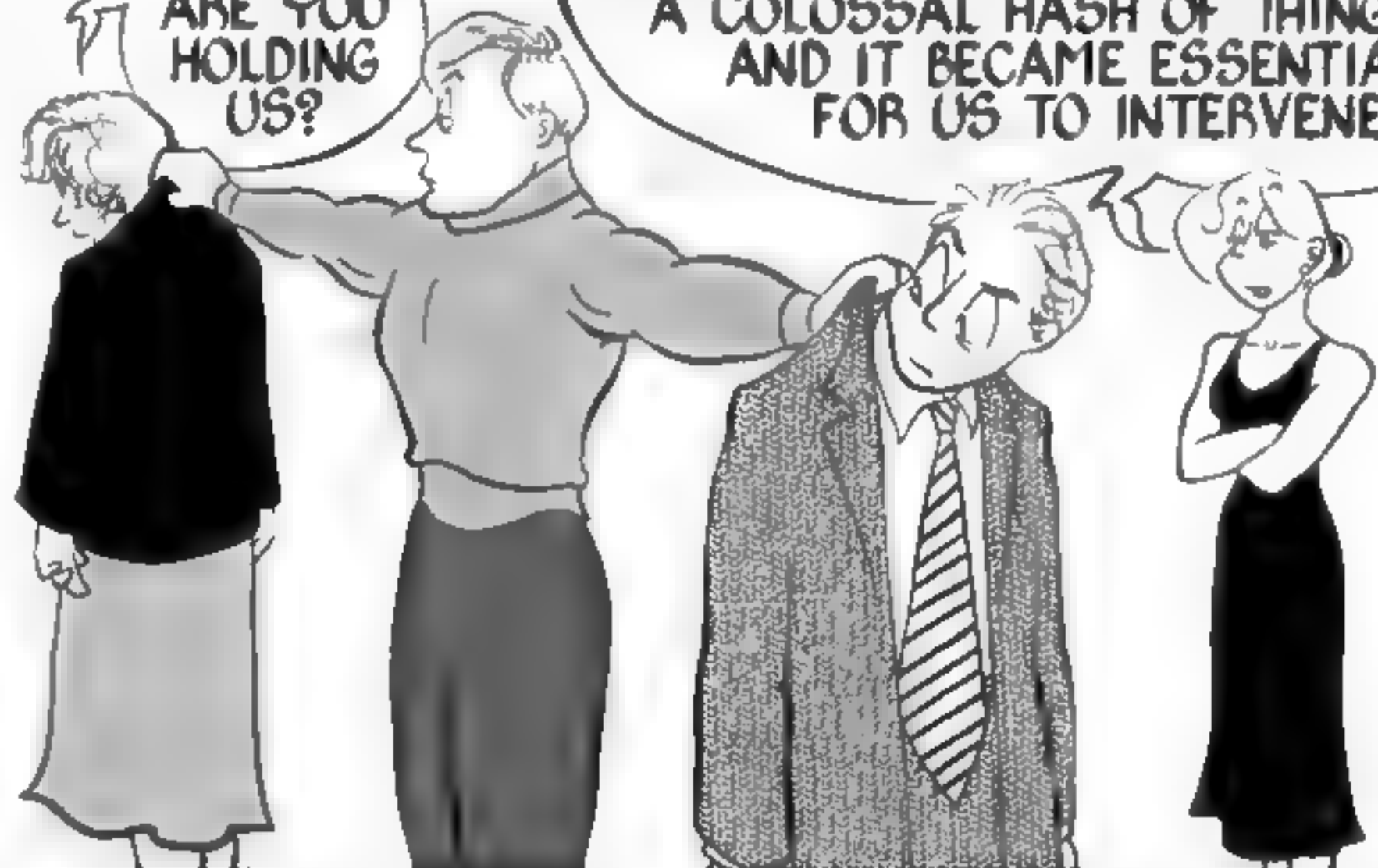
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*Brooke*

WHY  
ARE YOU  
HOLDING  
US?

BECAUSE YOU TWO ARE MAKING  
A COLOSSAL HASH OF THINGS  
AND IT BECAME ESSENTIAL  
FOR US TO INTERVENE.



MAKE IT QUICK,  
EDDA...I'VE GOT  
A HANGNAIL.

I THINK  
INTRODUCTIONS  
ARE UNNECESSARY...  
...YOU ALL KNOW MY  
GORILLA.





ANYONE CAN RECOGNIZE THE ENDURING  
BOND YOU TWO SHARE, AS WELL AS  
THE WHOPPING BOO-BOO YOU ARE  
ABOUT TO FORGE OUT OF YOUR  
OWN CUSSEDNESS.

I THINK JANE  
AUSTEN  
SAID  
IT BEST  
WHEN...

NOT  
JANE  
AUSTEN!  
NOT  
NOW!

*Brooke*

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YOU KNOW,  
WE DON'T  
CAPITULATE  
TO FORCE...

JUST LOOK  
AT EACH  
OTHER!



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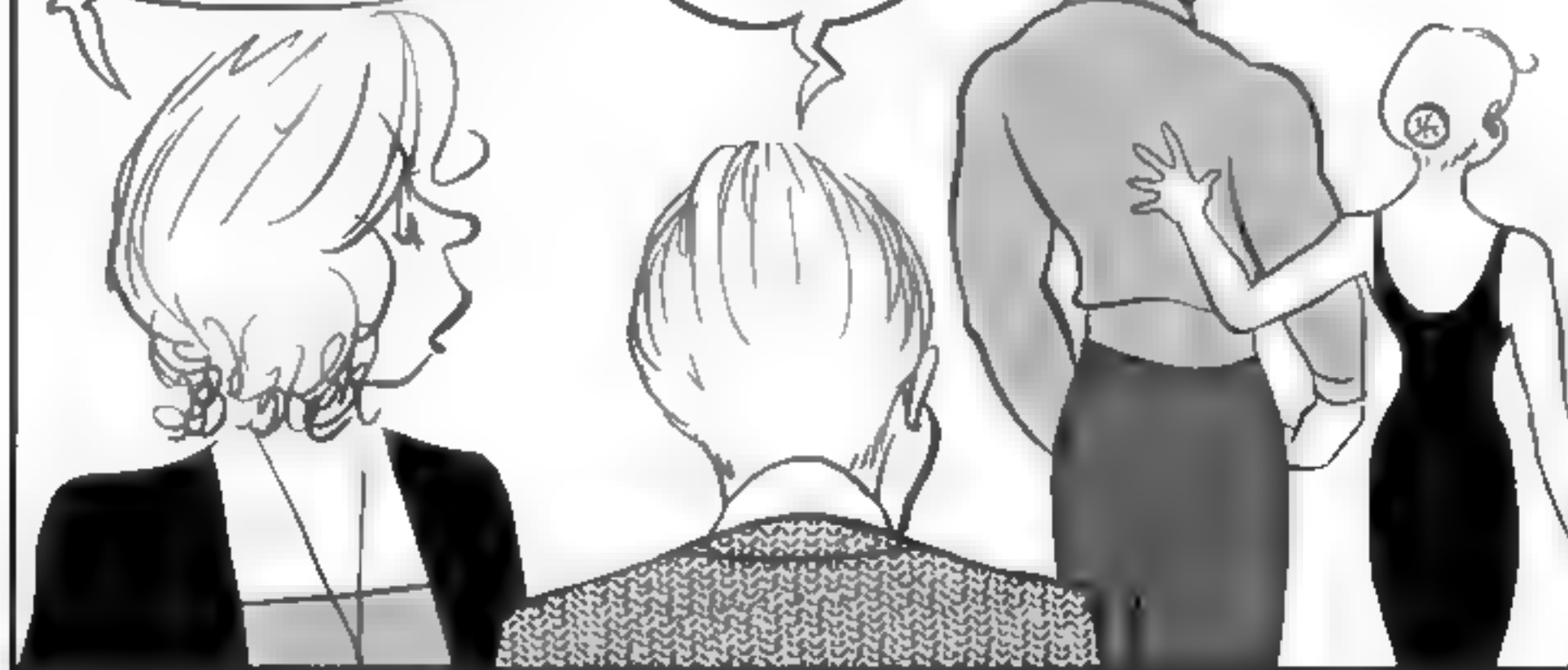
YOU MAY  
PUT THEM DOWN.  
WE HAVE  
DETENTE.



Brooks

IT'S JUST AS IF  
WE WERE RESCUED  
FROM THE BRINK  
BY THE CAPED  
CRUSADERS.

BY  
SUPERMAN  
AND LOIS  
LANE.



WE DID  
A GOOD THING,  
EH, OLLIE?

YOU'RE  
ABSOLUTELY  
RIGHT,  
STANLEY.



Brooke

A VOW OF CELIBACY  
DIDN'T MEAN I COULDN'T  
LOOK INTO SOMEONE'S  
EYES...FOR INSTANCE...  
AND SEE THE MOST  
BEAUTIFUL HAZEL...  
...OR HEAR A VOICE  
AND WANT TO GO  
ON LISTENING  
DAY AND  
NIGHT.

Brooke

...OR, FOR INSTANCE,  
THAT SOMEONE'S  
PRESENCE WOULDN'T  
FILL A VOID IN MY  
SOUL...OR MAKE ME  
ACHE FOR HER RETURN  
EVERY TIME SHE  
SAID GOODNIGHT.

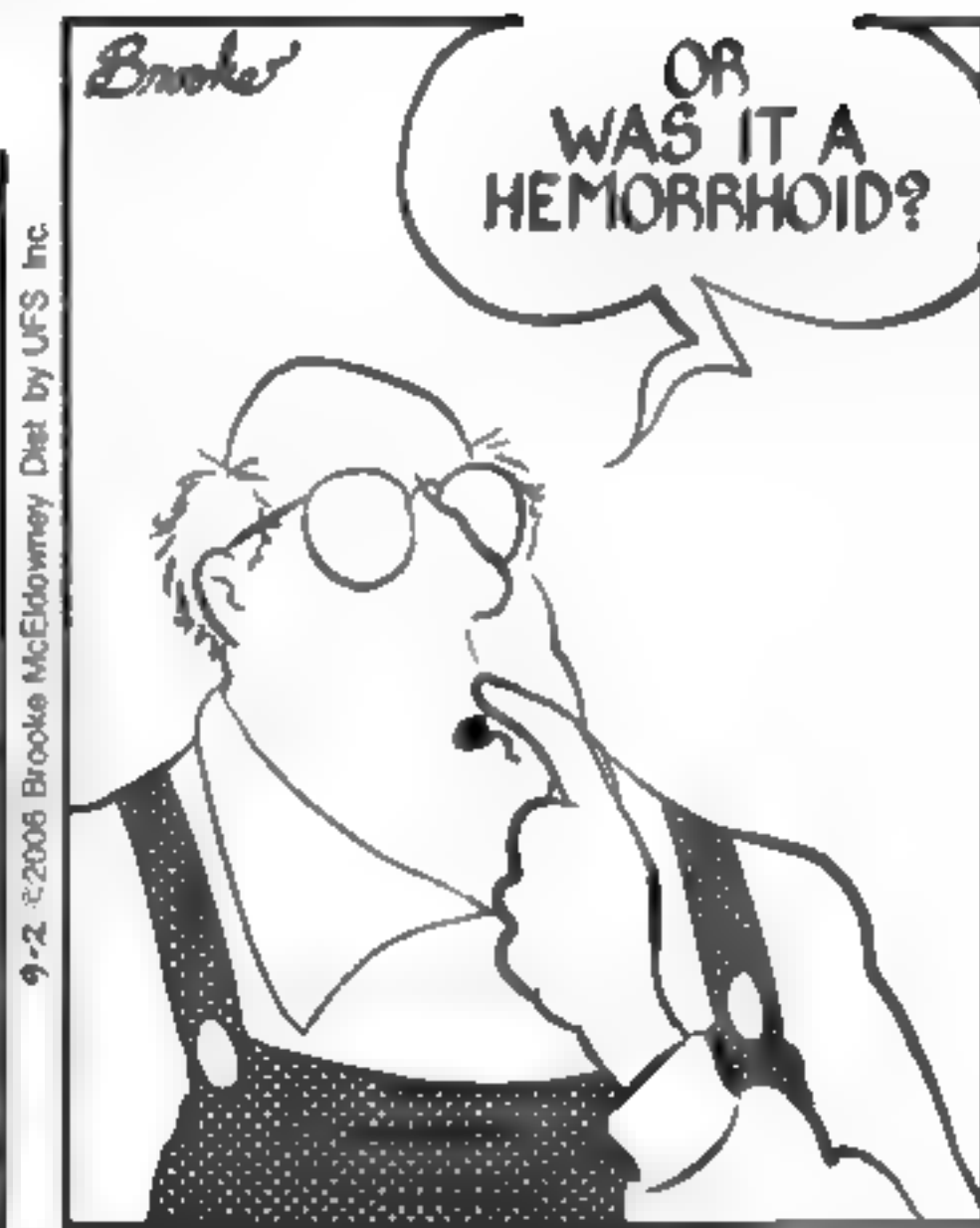
MY VOW DIDN'T MEAN,  
FOR INSTANCE, THAT I  
COULD NOT REGARD  
SOMEONE WITH GLADNESS  
AND GRATITUDE AS A  
MANIFESTATION  
OF GOD'S GRACE...

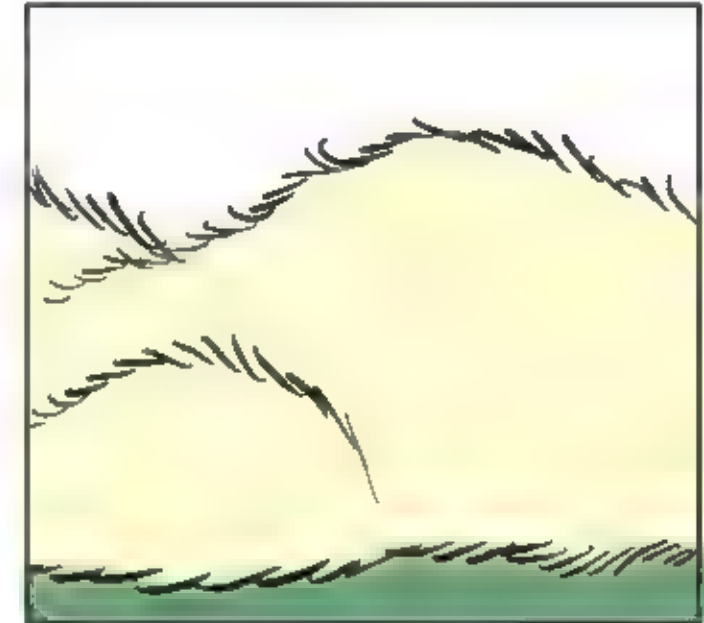
...OR THAT  
THAT PERSON COULD  
NOT BE YOU.

FOR  
INSTANCE?

OH, GOD,  
YES...  
...FOR  
INSTANCE.

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STATE of ALERT



HEIGHTENED ALERT



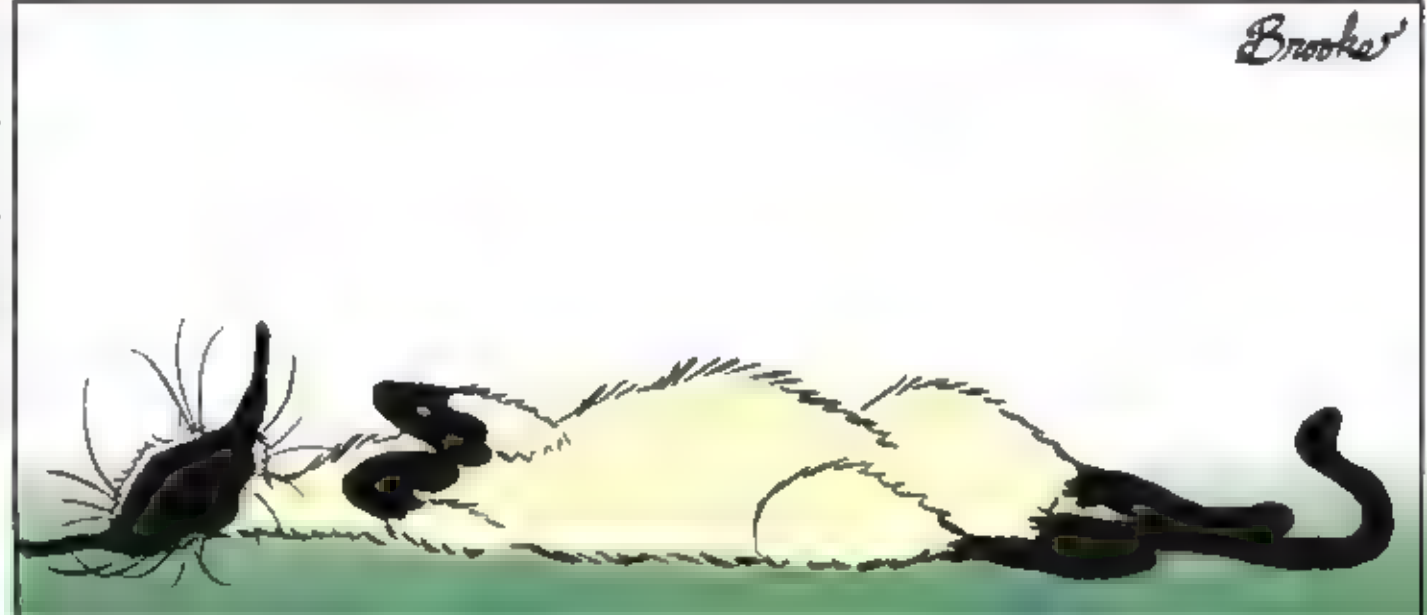
RED ALERT



SCRAMBLE



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Brooke

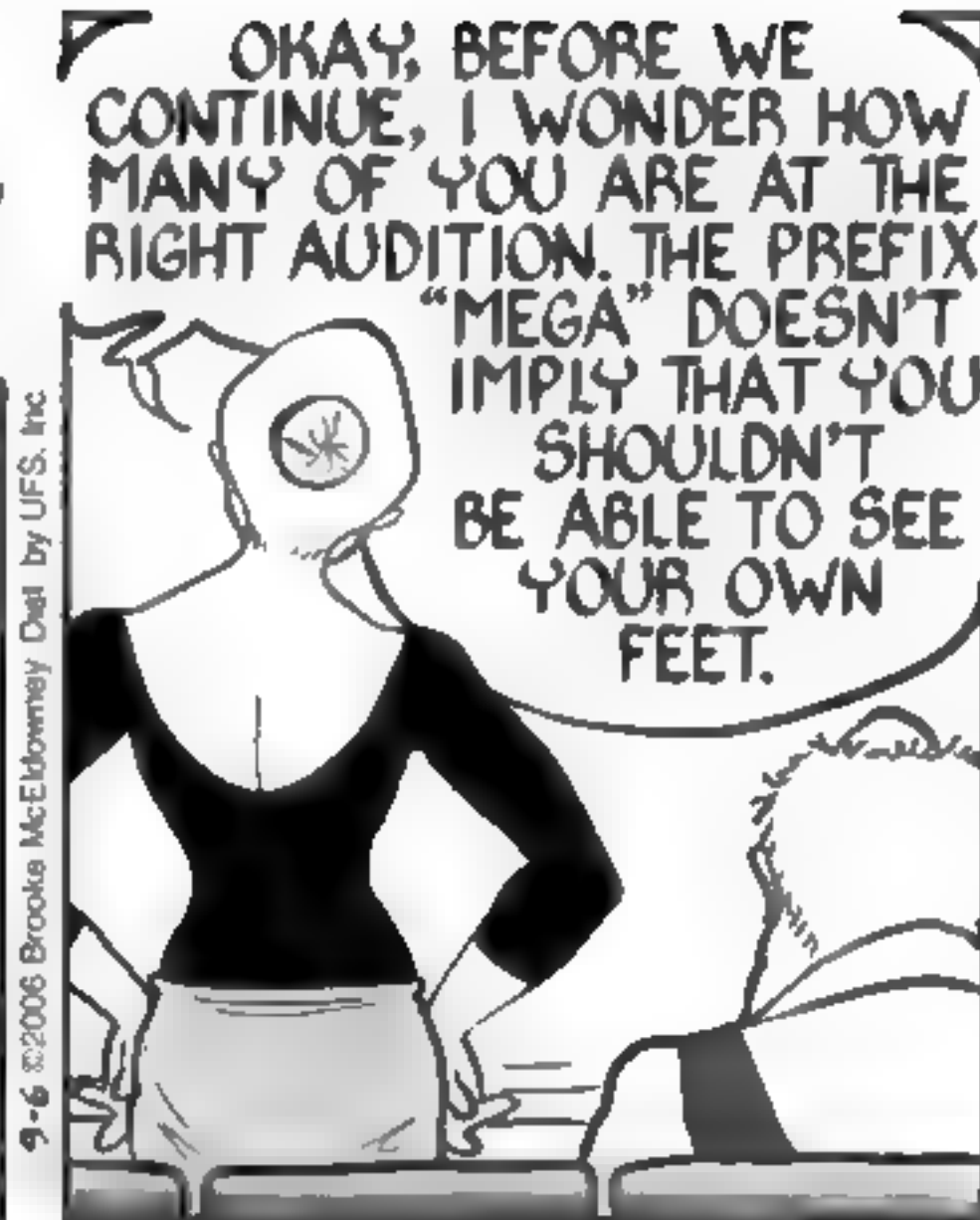




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I'M RUNNING  
DANCE  
AUDITIONS...  
...FOR  
**GOD?!**



NO...FOR MEGA-GOD.  
IT'S A NEW CONCEPT OF  
MONTY'S. AND HE FEELS  
ALL DANCE IS ESSENTIAL  
IN THE SCHEME, IN PARTI-  
CULAR TAP. WOULD YOU  
REALLY WANT A MEGA-  
DEITY WHO DOESN'T KNOW  
HOW TO EXECUTE  
A BUCK-AND-  
WING?



*Brooke*



OKAY, YOU GUYS!  
PICK UP YOUR FEET!  
...A-ONE AND  
A-TWO...





IF "MEGA-GOD" IS REALLY  
HIS IDEA, WHY DOESN'T  
HE JUST  
CAST IT  
HIMSELF?

HE TRIED,  
BUT COLIN  
MOCHRIE  
WAS  
ALREADY  
BOOKED.

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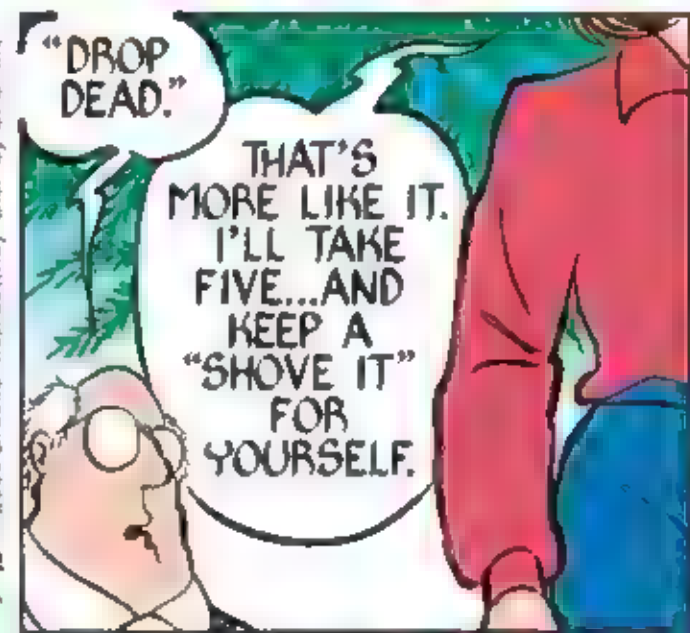
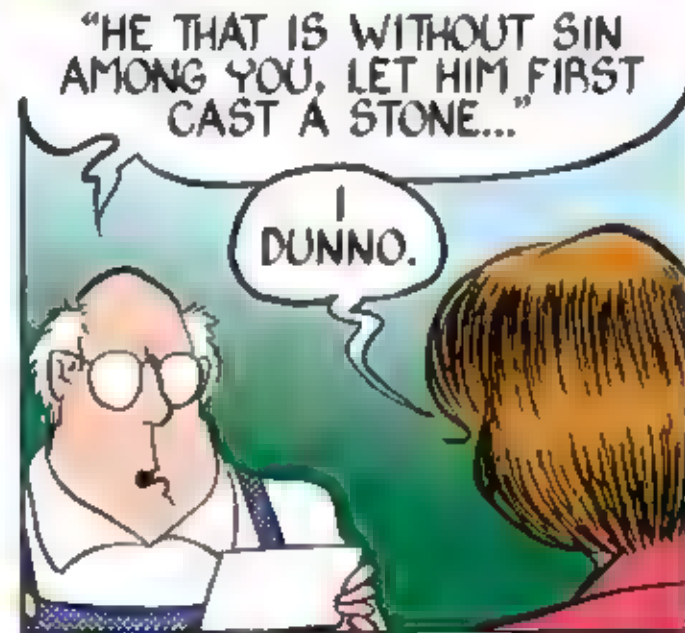
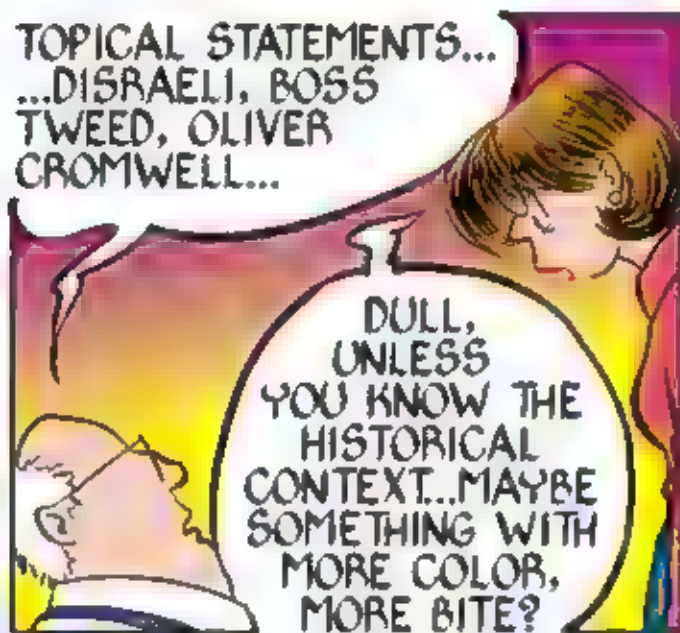
SO MONTY  
CALLED ME IN  
TO START  
CANVASSING  
FOR TALENT.

*Brooke*

SORRY, DEAR, YOU'RE JUST  
NOT THE RIGHT  
TYPE. BUT,  
YOU COULD  
PLAY HIS  
PERKY BUT  
WAYWARD  
SIDEKICK.

MEGA-  
SATAN?

# 9 CHICKWEED LANE



WHY IS THIS DEITY  
INDIVIDUAL YOU  
REFER TO...

MONTY  
ALMIGHTY.



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YES, MONTY...  
...WHY IS MONTY  
SO SET UPON  
CASTING A MEGA-  
GOD?



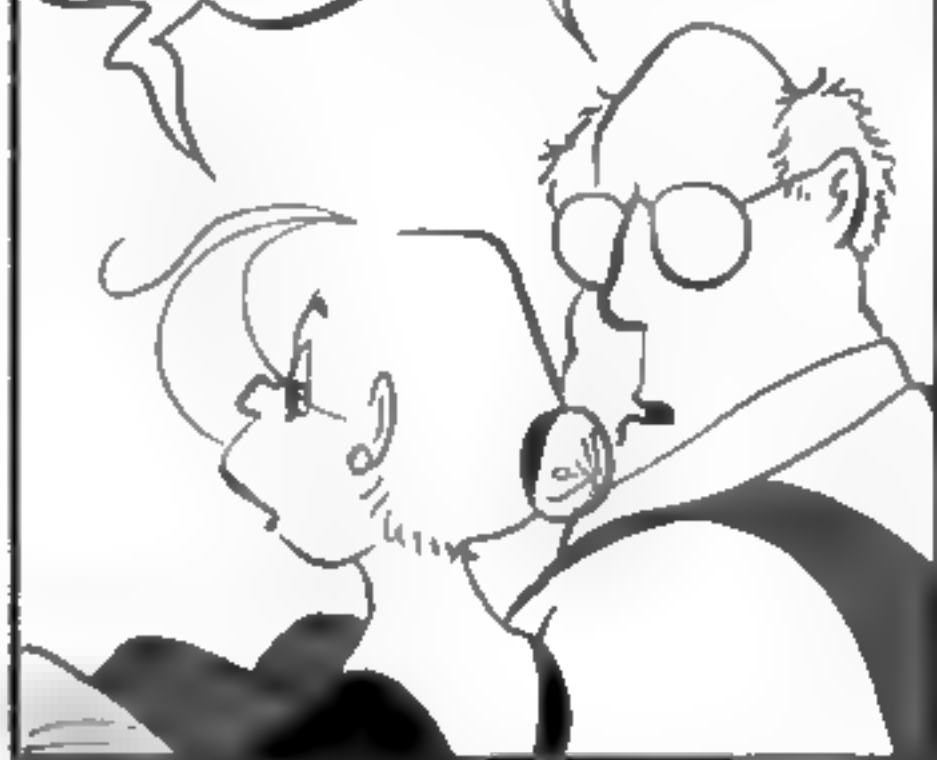
WELL, WITH THE PROFUSION  
OF MEGA-CHURCHES AND  
MEGA-CONGREGATIONS  
LISTENING TO MEGA-PUBLIC  
ADDRESS SYSTEMS AND  
WATCHING THEIR HOMILIES  
ON MEGA-SCREENS WHILE  
THEIR CARS BAKE IN  
MEGA-PARKING LOTS, IT  
ONLY SEEMED RIGHT THEY  
HAVE A MEGA-GOD TO  
MEASURE  
UP TO THE  
OCCASION.



Brooke

GLORIA  
IN EXCELSIS  
MEGA-DEO...  
...THAT'S  
MEGA-  
LATIN.

YOU'RE  
CATCHING  
ON,  
GRASS-  
HOPPER.





WHAT ABOUT THIS GUY?  
HE GOT GOOD REVIEWS AS  
HENRY V, AND  
HAROLD HILL IN  
"THE MUSIC  
MAN."



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TEETH OKAY, SHOULDERS  
GOOD...EYES ARE A TAD  
PIGGY...I'LL ASK  
MONTY.



I GOT HIS MACHINE.  
HE'S JUDGING THE QUICK  
AND THE DEAD. SHOULD  
WE LEAVE A MESSAGE?



Brooke





I GOT A MESSAGE FROM MONTY. THIS LAST APPLICANT FOR MEGA-GOD...HE SAYS TO TAKE A PASS. WE'RE LOOKING FOR REAL TALENT.

TALENT!? THE GUY HAS AWARDS COMING OUT HIS EARS, HIS SHAKESPEARE HAS BEEN HAILED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, SOME HAVE SAID HE WEARS THE MANTLE OF OLIVIER.

YES, BUT HOW WILL HE LOOK IN A RED SPEEDO, ADMINISTERING THE KISS OF LIFE TO AN AUGMENTED BLONDE UNDER THE WATCHFUL GAZE OF A CROWD OF MOUTH-BREATHING, SPRING BREAK COEDS?

ANYBODY CAN PLAY SHYLOCK, BUT HOW MANY CAN PUT HIM OVER IN A SPANDEX THONG FULL OF SAND?

I SO LOVE IT WHEN YOU START DEFINING GREATNESS.

Brooke

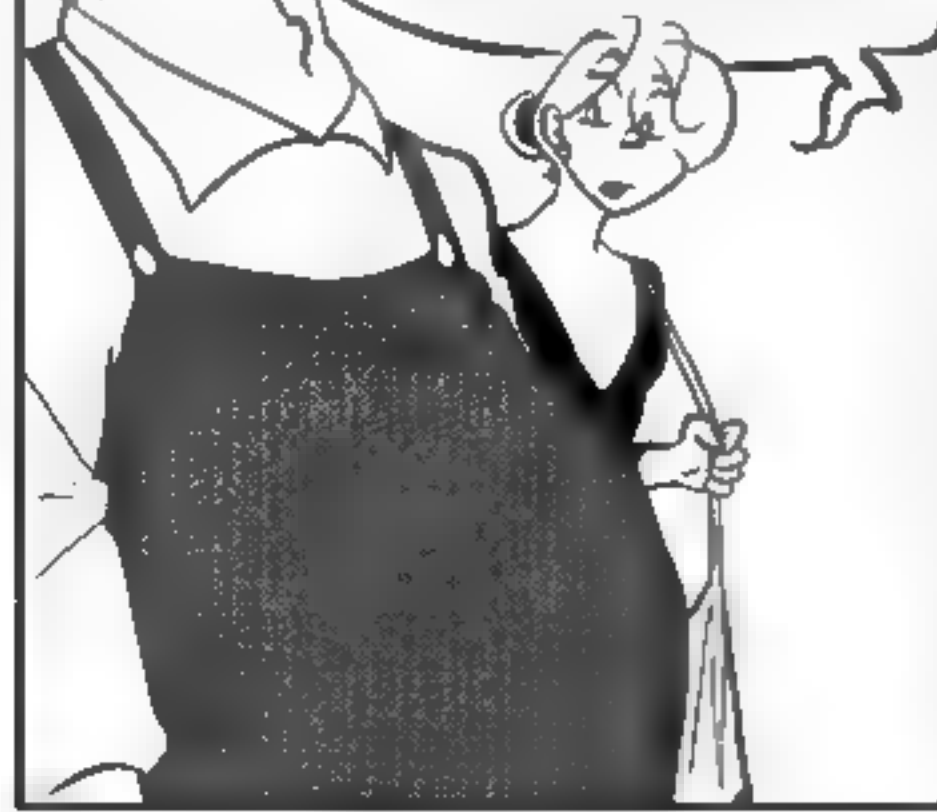
MONTY'S CALLED OFF AUDITIONS FOR MEGA-GOD. HE'S NOT ENTHUSED WITH THE CROP WE'VE BEEN GETTING. HE SAYS THE MEGA-CHURCHES WILL JUST HAVE TO CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH THE MENTALISTS, PRESTIDIGITATORS AND OTHER FRAUDS TO WHICH THEY'RE ACCUSTOMED.

Brooke

WHY DOESN'T MONTY GET PERSONALLY INVOLVED? HE'S A NON-LINEAR BEING...HE CAN BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.



IN A TRICE HE COULD CURE ALL THE WORLD'S WOES. FOR INSTANCE, I HAVE A LITTLE SKIN CONDITION ON MY ELBOW...



WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE ENTITY WHO FORGED THE COSMOS FROM A FORMLESS VOID, THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. YOU DON'T EXPECT HIM TO TAKE ON SOMETHING LIKE THE MEDICAL-HEALTH INSURANCE COMPLEX!



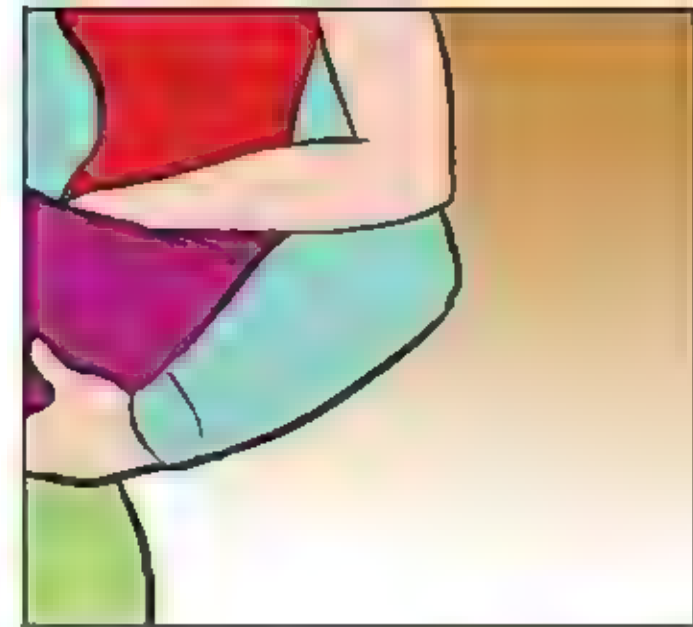
SORRY. I WAS TALKING MADNESS.



I APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORT  
TO ASSUME CORPOREAL FORM  
AND SPEAK TO HUMANITY,  
MONTY...BUT COULD I  
MAKE JUST ONE LITTLE  
SUGGESTION...?

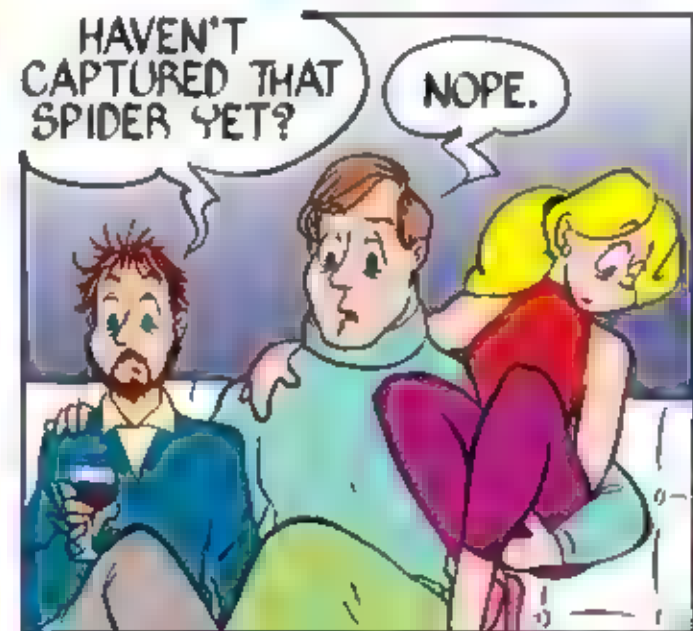
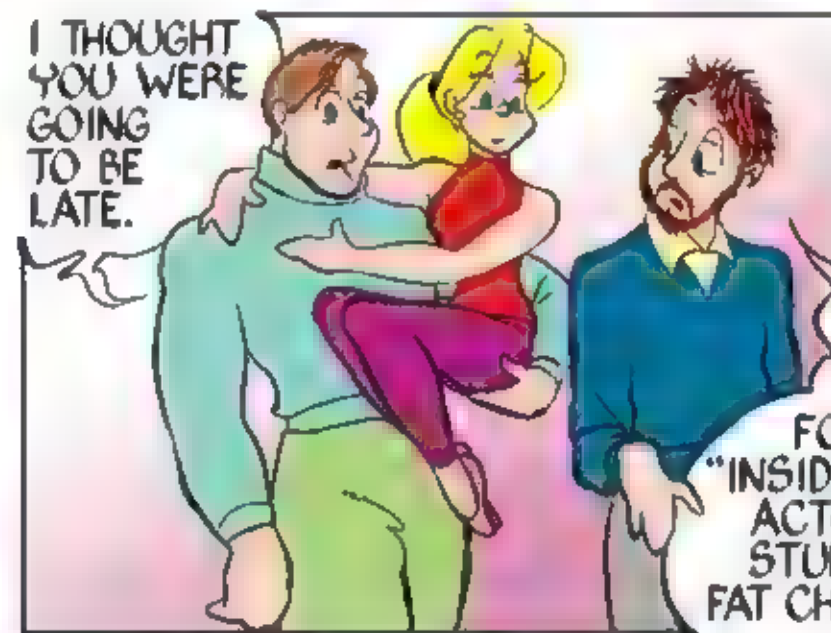






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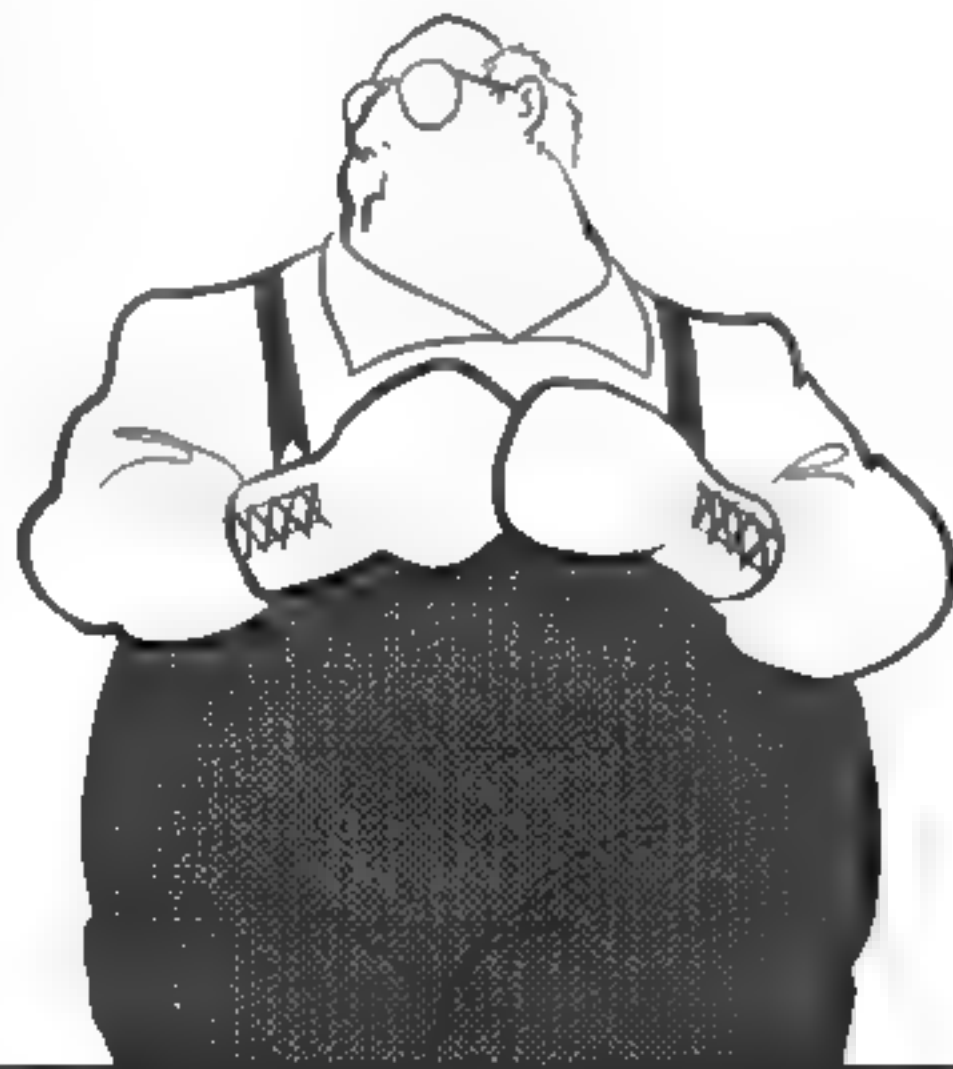
Brooke







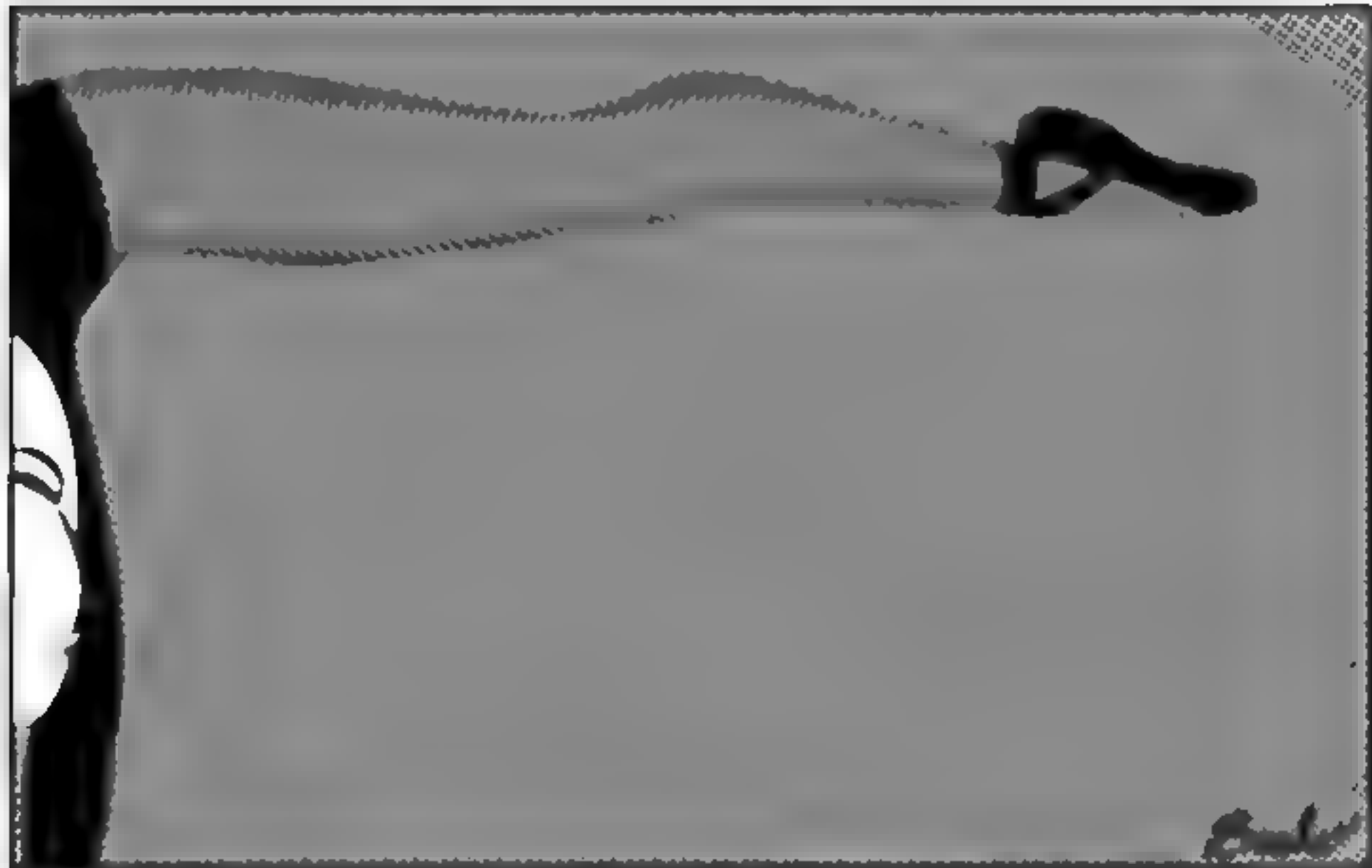
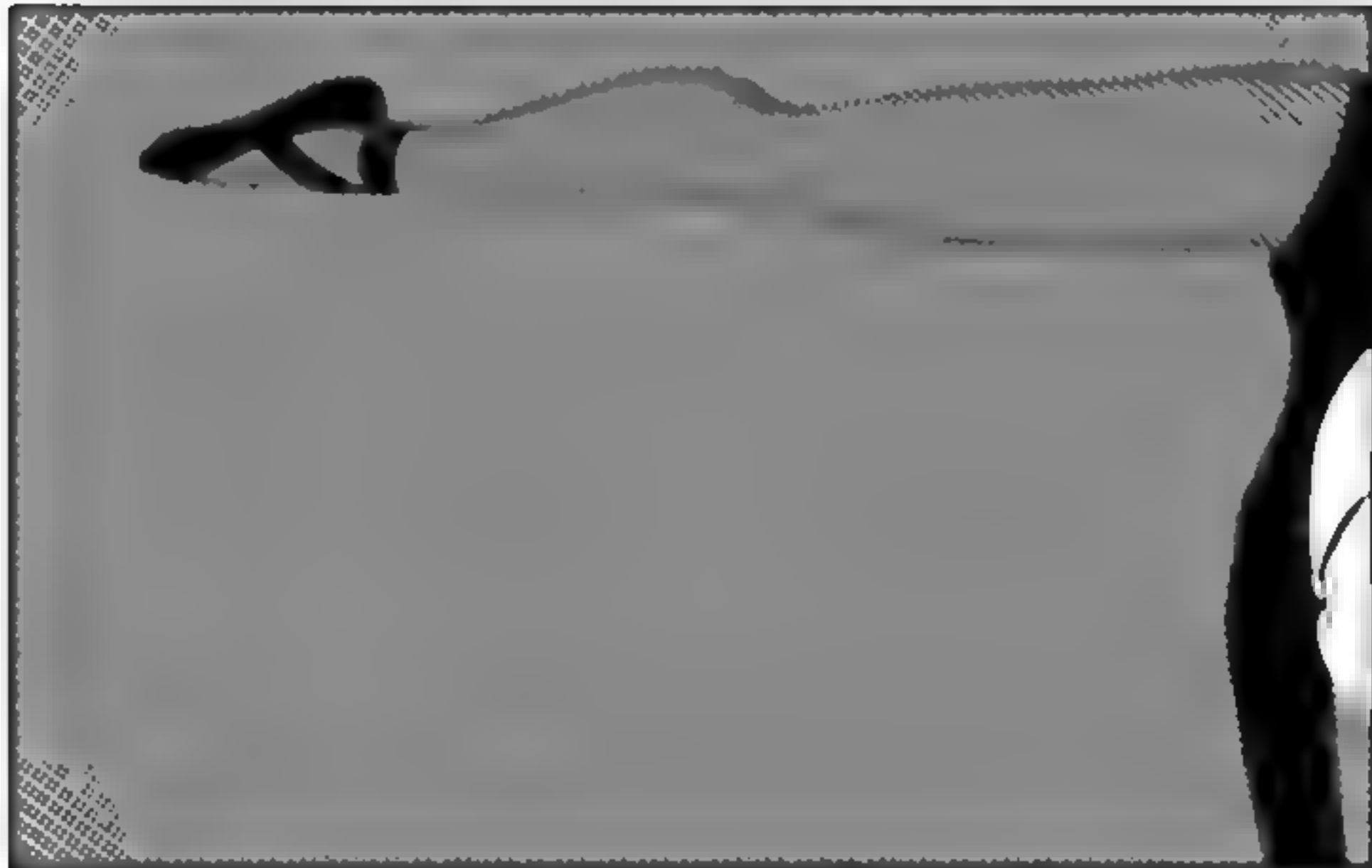
MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX:  
PICKING THE  
GOOD FIGHT  
(A CONCISE  
HISTORY)



Brooke

AT ONE TIME OR  
ANOTHER, THE WHOLE  
WORLD GOES TO  
BLAZES LAUGHING  
AT ABSURDITY  
RATHER THAN  
RECOGNIZE THE  
CONVICTION  
BEHIND IT.





**MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX:  
PICKING THE  
GOOD FIGHT  
(A CONCISE  
HISTORY)**



Brooks

A PEACEFUL POPULACE  
NEVER WANT TO VOTE  
FOR A PERSON WHO  
IS WARLIKE; IN THIS,  
THEY AND THEIR  
ENEMIES ARE IN  
TOTAL ACCORD.





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MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX:  
PICKING THE  
GOOD FIGHT  
(A CONCISE  
HISTORY)



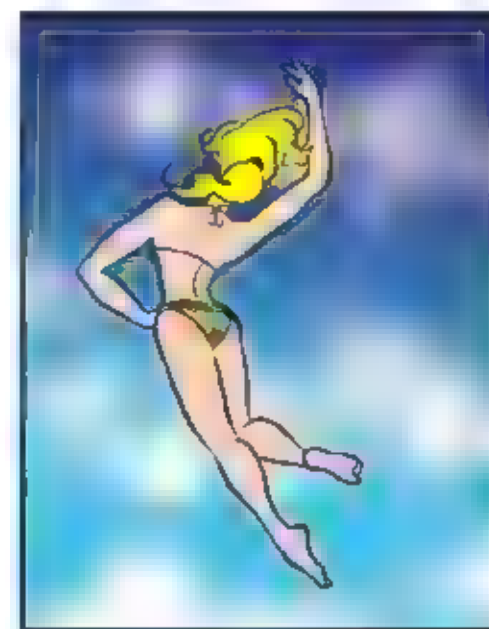
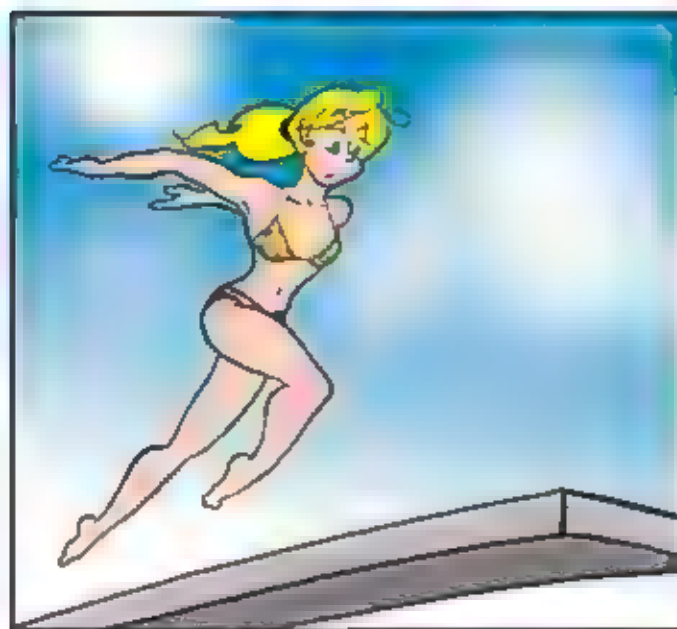
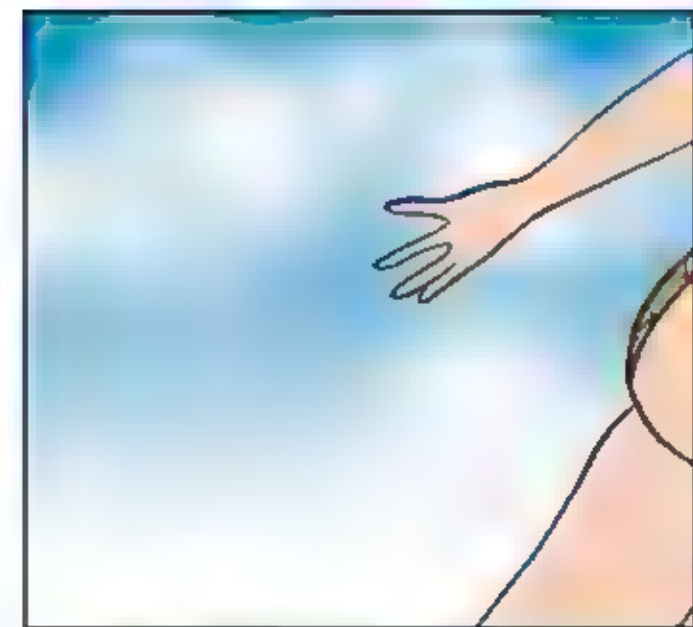
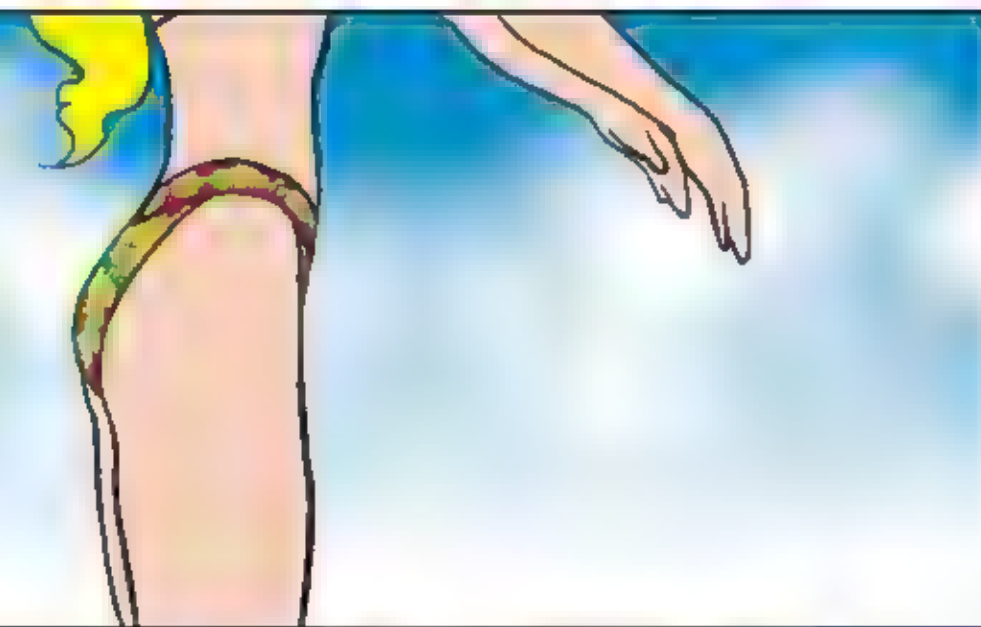
*Brooke*



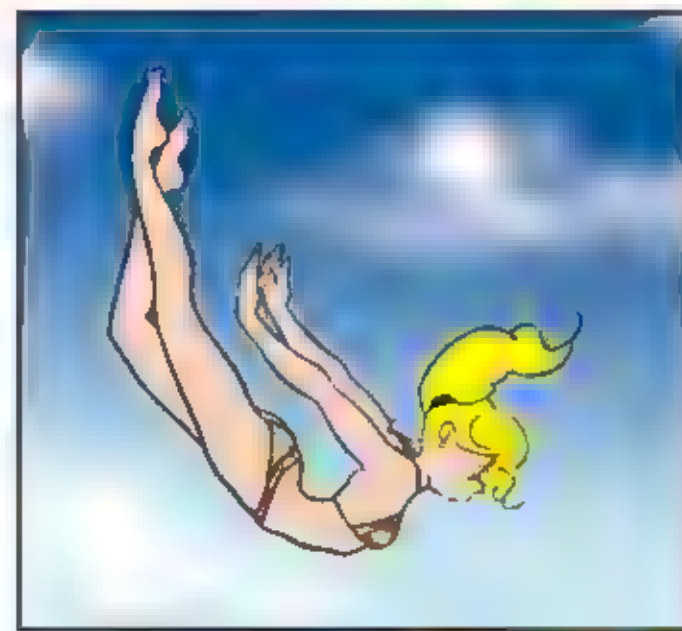
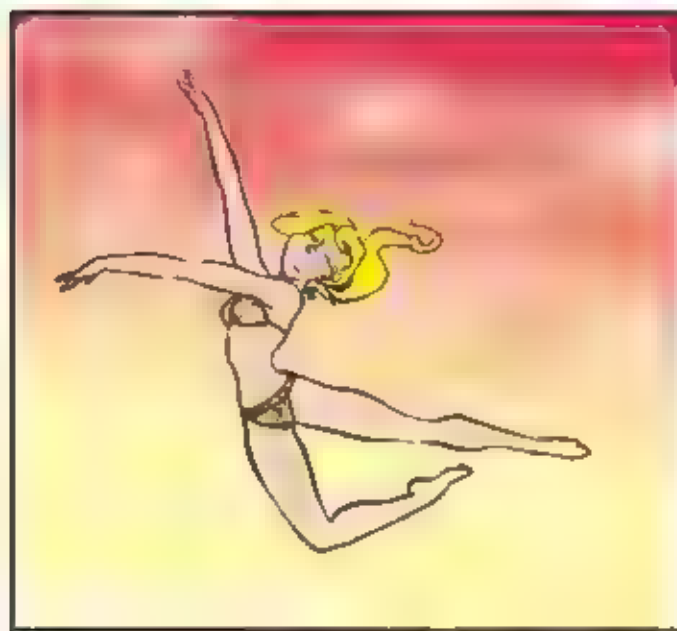
RUNNING AWAY  
IS THE COWARD'S  
WAY OUT OF WAR.

APPEASEMENT  
IS THE COWARD'S  
WAY INTO ONE.





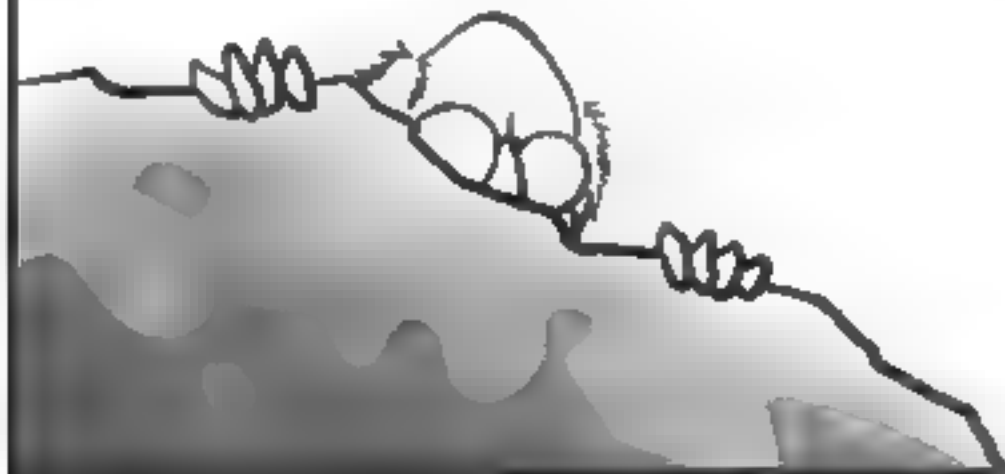
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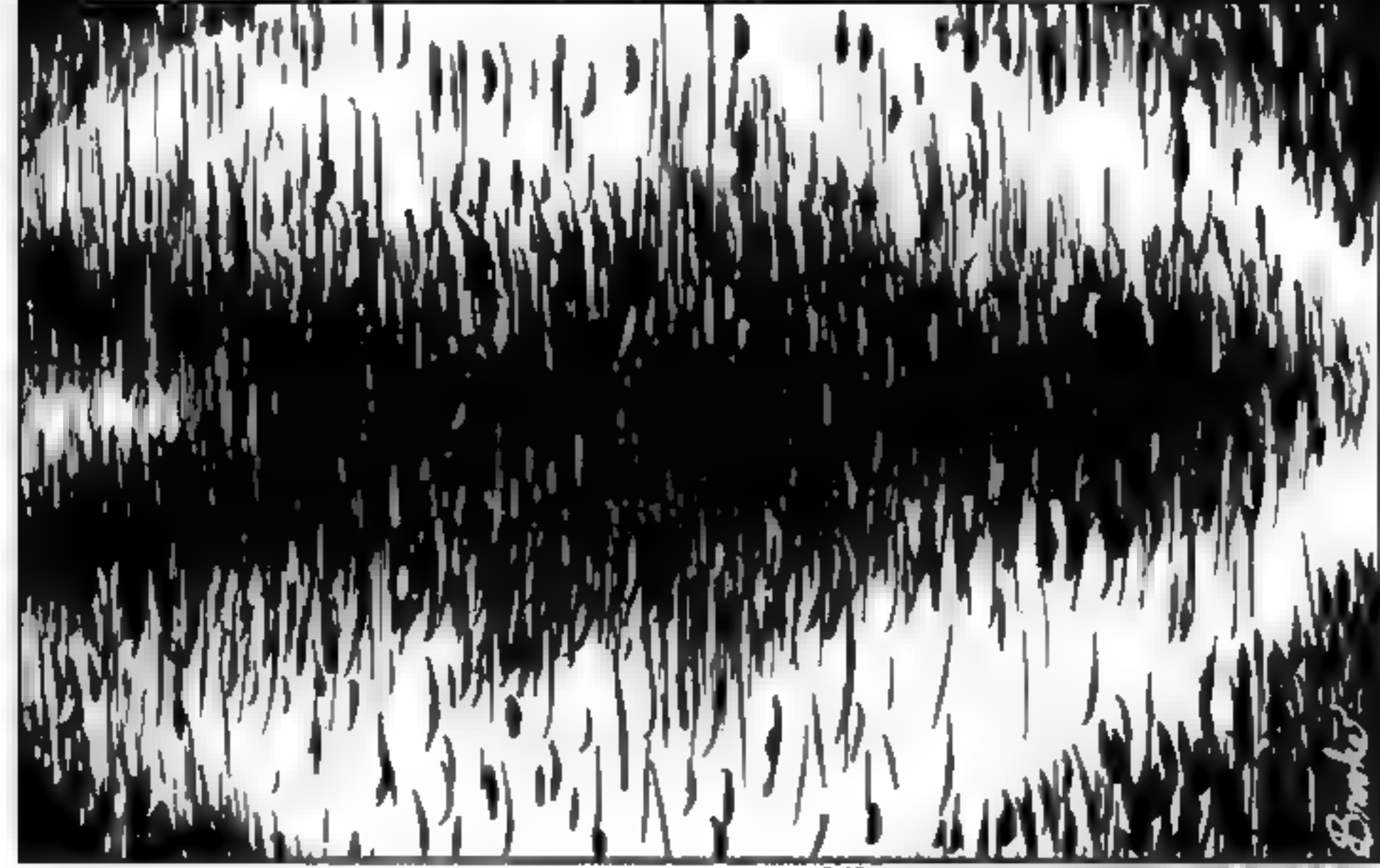
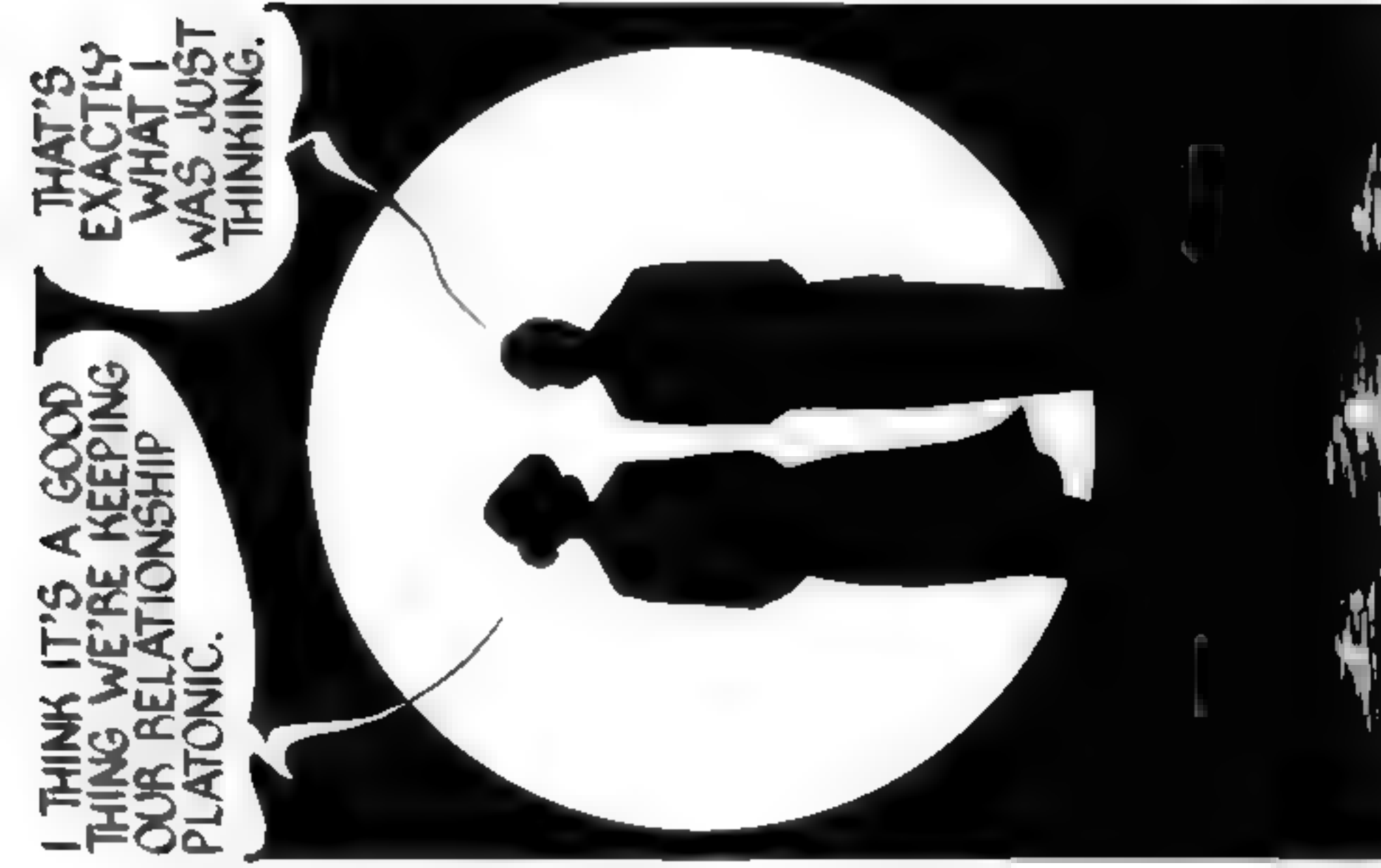
Brooke

MEDITATIONS  
OF THORAX:  
PICKING THE  
GOOD FIGHT  
(A CONCISE  
HISTORY)

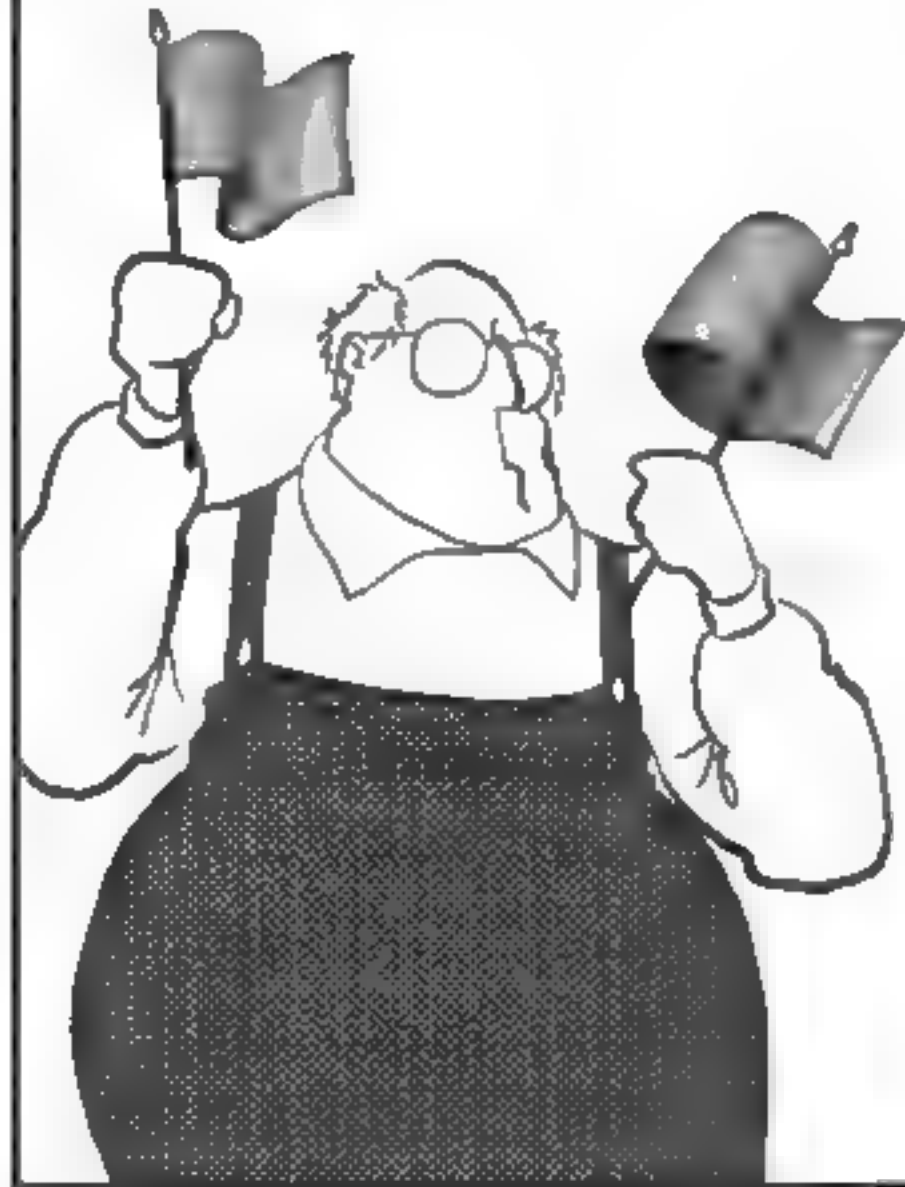


IN MASSIVE  
CONFLICTS, ALL  
WARRING PARTIES  
DECLARE GOD'S  
SANCTION AND  
PRESENCE ON THEIR  
SIDE – ENSURING  
THAT NO MATTER  
THE OUTCOME, GOD  
CANNOT LOSE.





Brooke



WHEN EVERY  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO BICKER,  
BLAME, TEMPORIZE,  
BETRAY, COLLUDE,  
EVADE, COWER,  
SUBVERT AND  
APPEASE HAS BEEN  
EXHAUSTED,  
A PEOPLE WILL  
INEVITABLY  
PROCLAIM THEIR  
UNANIMITY IN THE  
FIGHT FOR WHAT  
IS RIGHT.



FROM ALL INDICATIONS,  
YOU HAVE HAD A LONG  
LIFE...HOW DO YOU STAY  
SO YOUNG?

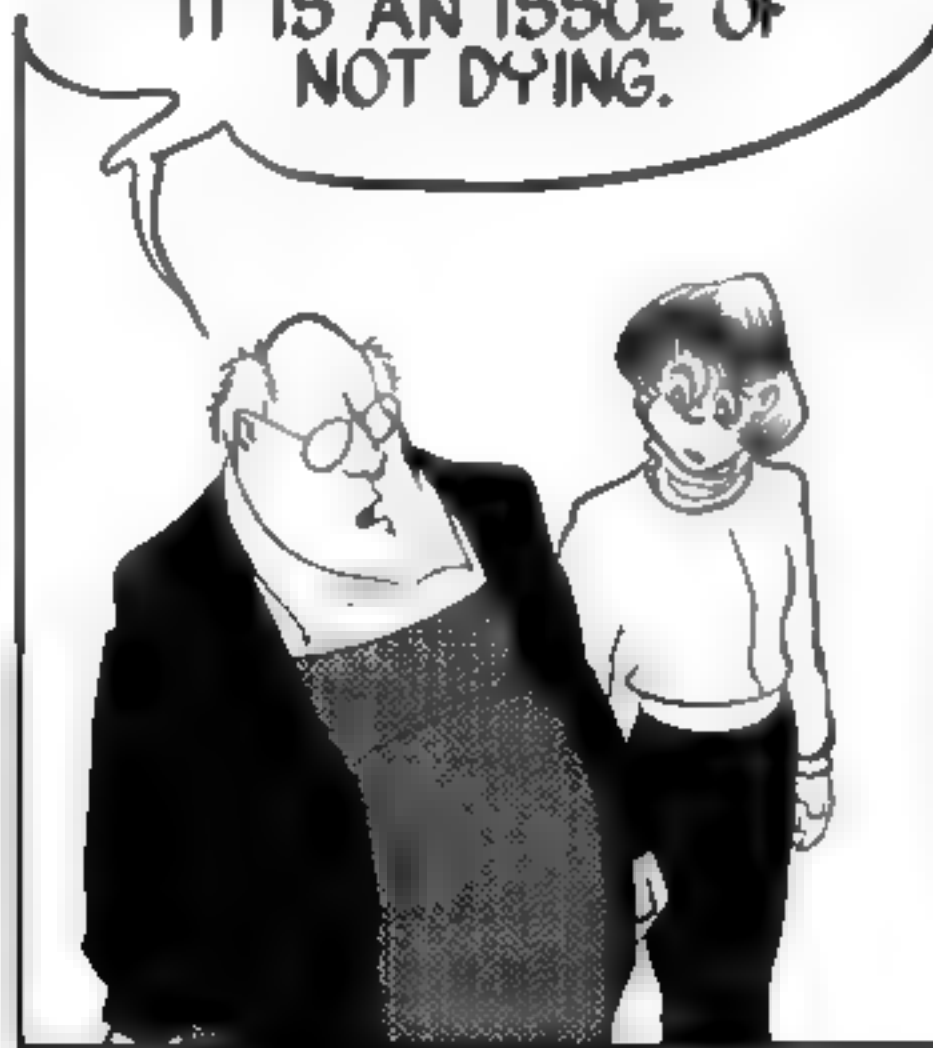


SINCE MY APPEARANCE  
DOES NOT BETOKEN YOUTH,  
YOUR QUERY LEAVES THE  
BYSTANDER PONDERING ONE  
OF TWO IMPRESSIONS:  
EITHER YOU ARE  
PATHOLOGICALLY  
DISHONEST OR  
PAINFULLY  
STUPID.

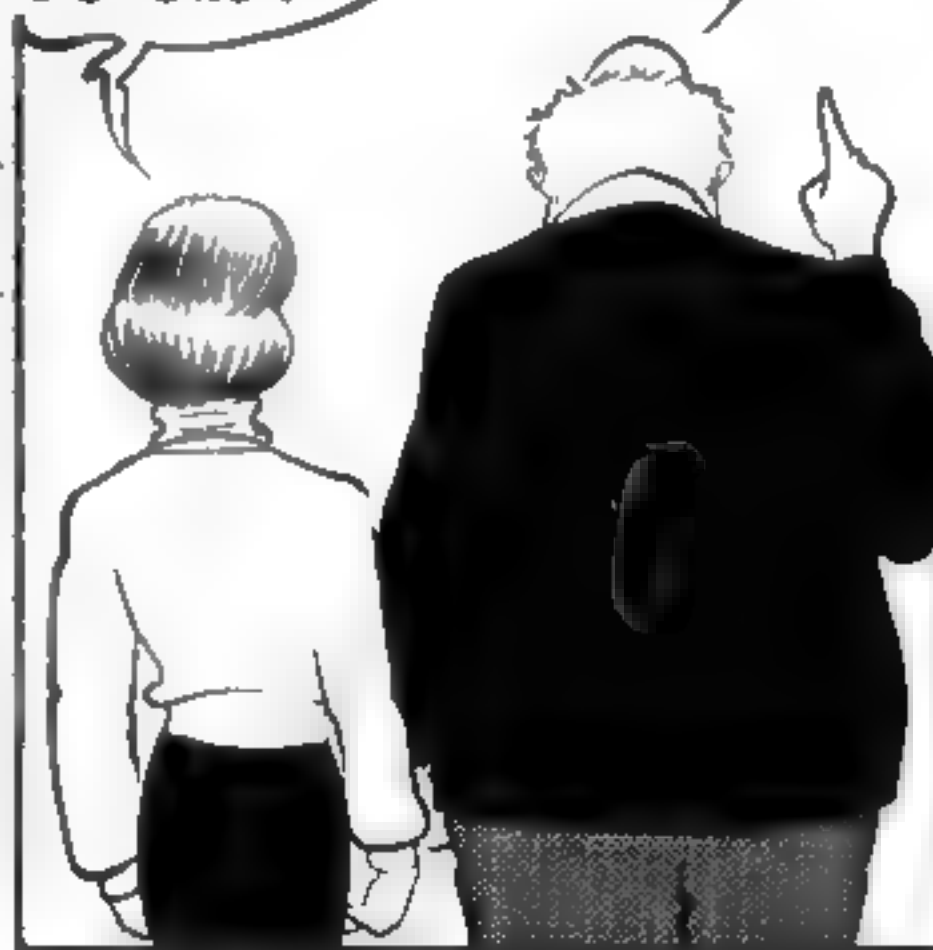


*Brooke*

LONGEVITY IS NOT AN  
ISSUE OF STAYING YOUNG.  
IT IS AN ISSUE OF  
NOT DYING.



OKAY, THEN...  
...HOW DO  
YOU STAY  
SO OLD?



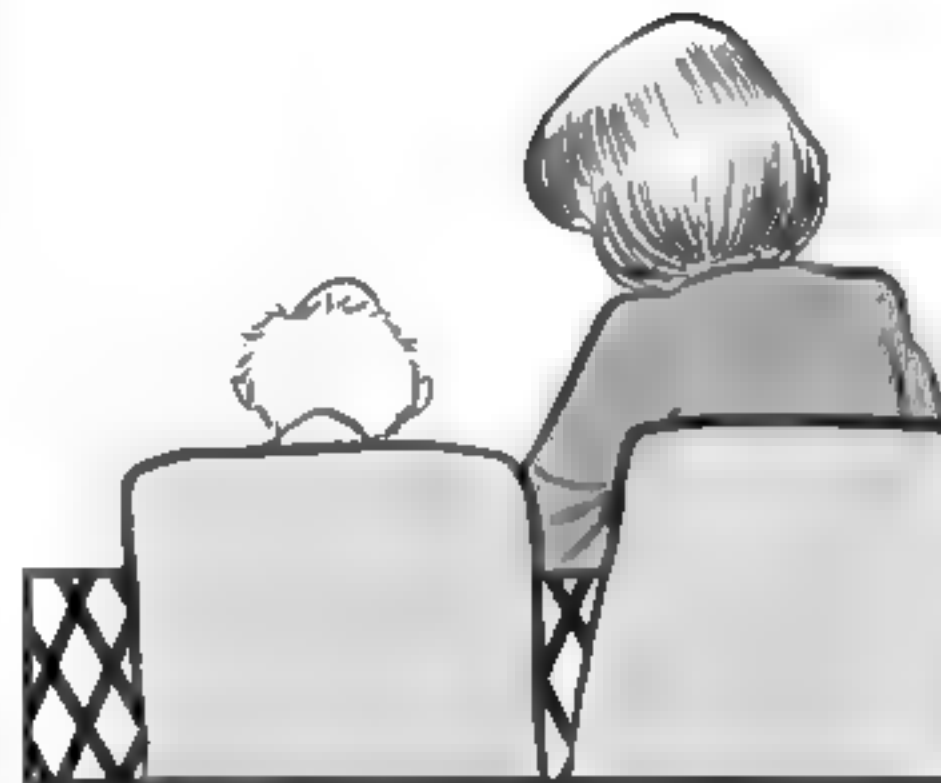
SODIUM  
BENZOATE.

I JUST FELT I SHOULD BRING  
TO YOUR ATTENTION SOME OF  
THE MORE IRRATIONAL  
IF NOT PREPOSTEROUS  
THINGS THORAX  
HAS BEEN SAYING.  
I THINK IT IS  
IMPORTANT FOR  
YOU, AS HIS  
REPUTEDLY  
NEAREST  
RELATIVE,  
TO BE  
AWARE  
OF THEM.



YOUR SON SEEMS TO  
BE HARMLESS ENOUGH,  
BUT ONE IS GIVEN  
PAUSE SOMETIMES,  
AND FEELS THE NEED  
TO CONFER. I HOPE  
YOU UNDERSTAND  
AND APPRECIATE  
MY CONCERN.

*Brooke*



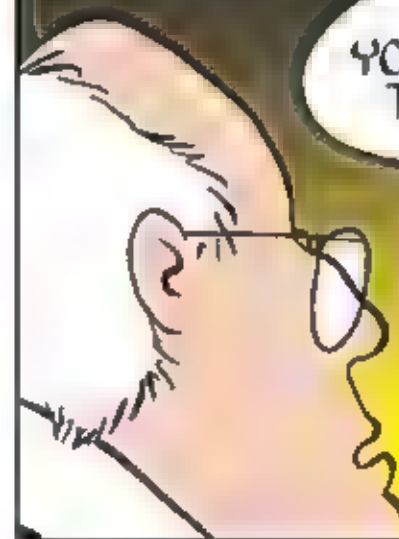
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AND WHATEVER  
THAT IS ON MY  
THIGH, GET IT  
OFF.



# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

®

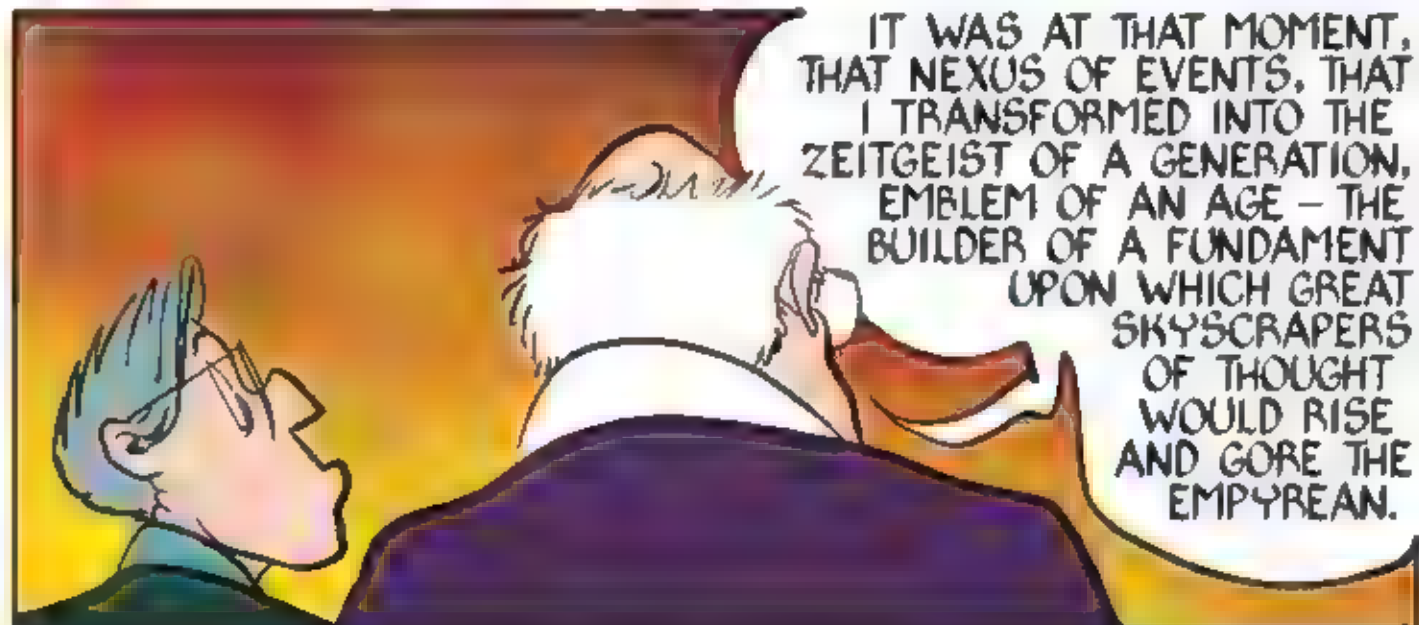


HAVE  
YOU A COMB  
TO LEND?

THUS IT WAS, IN THE GATHERING  
CLOUDS OF THE COLD WAR,  
I REALIZED MY PRESENCE IN  
THIS WORLD COULD NO LONGER  
BE THAT OF DISPASSIONATE  
RECORDER, A RUBBERNECKER  
TO THE HEAD-ON COLLISION  
OF HISTORY. BUFFETED ON  
THE WINDS OF CHANGE,  
I BECAME INVOLVED.



Brooke

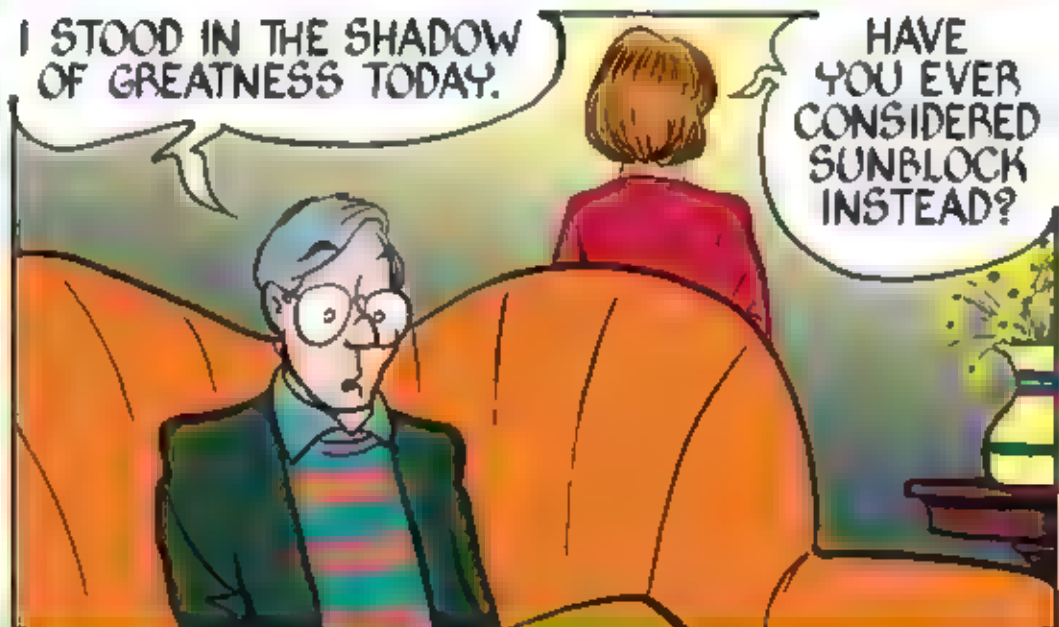


IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT,  
THAT NEXUS OF EVENTS, THAT  
I TRANSFORMED INTO THE  
ZEITGEIST OF A GENERATION,  
EMBLEM OF AN AGE – THE  
BUILDER OF A FUNDAMENT  
UPON WHICH GREAT  
SKYSCRAPERS  
OF THOUGHT  
WOULD RISE  
AND GORE THE  
EMPYREAN.



I COINED  
THE WORD  
"KOOKY."

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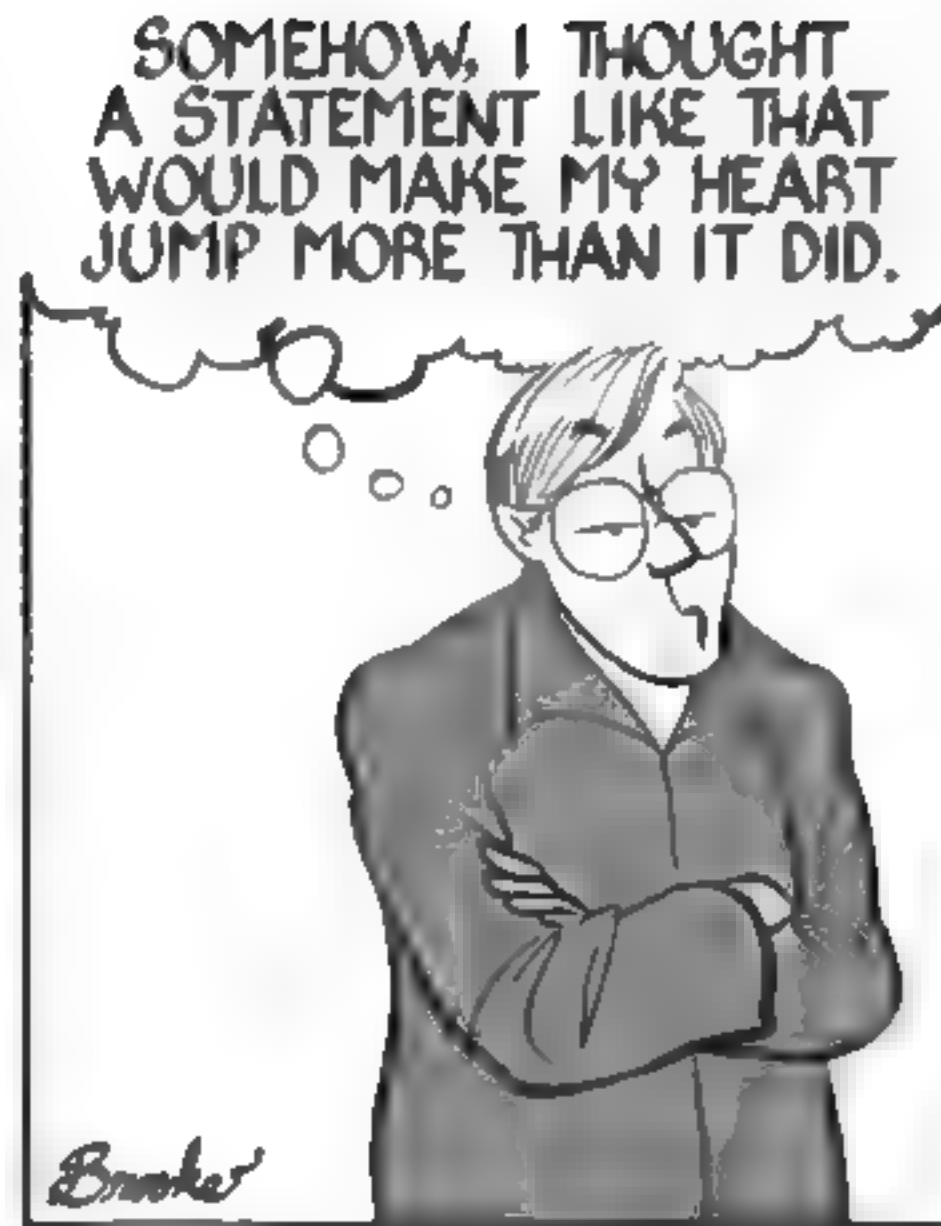
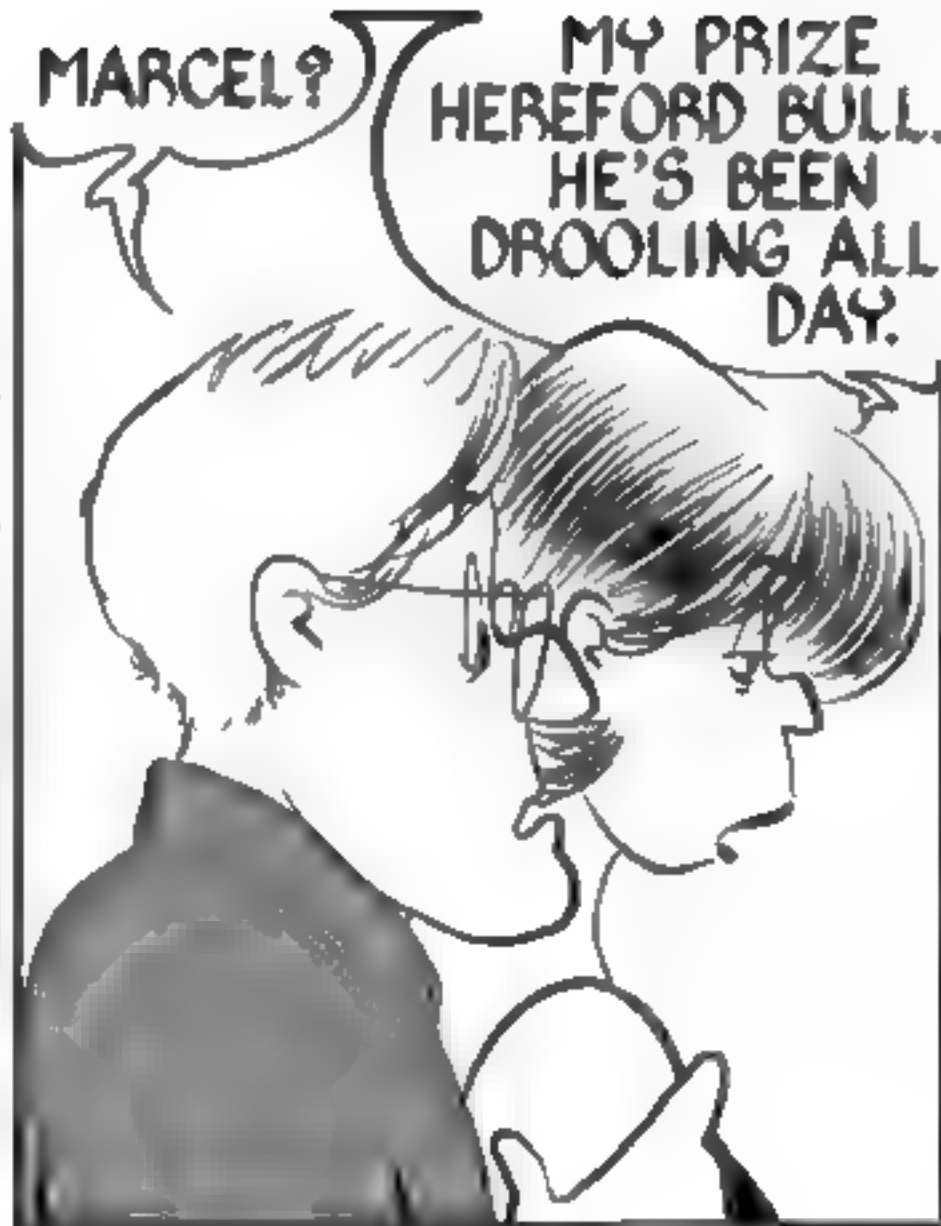


I STOOD IN THE SHADOW  
OF GREATNESS TODAY.

HAVE  
YOU EVER  
CONSIDERED  
SUNBLOCK  
INSTEAD?



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CAN'T YOU COME TO BED  
AND DEAL WITH MARCEL  
IN THE MORNING?

I  
COULDN'T  
SLEEP...I'M  
CALLING  
THE  
VET.

/D-3  
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UM...ACTUALLY...WHEN  
I SAID "COME TO BED," I  
DIDN'T MEAN...YOU KNOW...  
TO  
SLEEP.

I  
CATCH  
YOUR  
DRIFT.  
WE'RE  
ON THE  
SAME  
PAGE.

Broder

WILL YOU  
WAIT UP  
FOR ME?

I'LL JUST  
STAY IN  
THIS FETAL  
POSITION.





10-4  
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AH, DR. SPOCKET, HOW NICE  
TO SEE YOU  
AGAIN.

I CAN'T STOP,  
THORAX...I'M ON A  
MISSION OF MERCY.  
...HOW ARE YOU?



CAN'T COMPLAIN, REALLY.  
...THE QUANTUM ANOMALY  
SWALLOWED UP MY VINTAGE  
JOHN DEERE, TRIGGERING  
CERTAIN REPERCUSSIONS  
IN REMOTE ARMS  
OF THE GALAXY...



...PAP IS CONTEMPLATING A  
HIP REPLACEMENT, BUT  
INSISTS ON A TEST DRIVE...  
...AND MADELEINE, MY  
JERSEY HEIFER, IS  
WORKING ON HER  
FRENCH VERB  
FORMS AT THE  
SORBONNE.

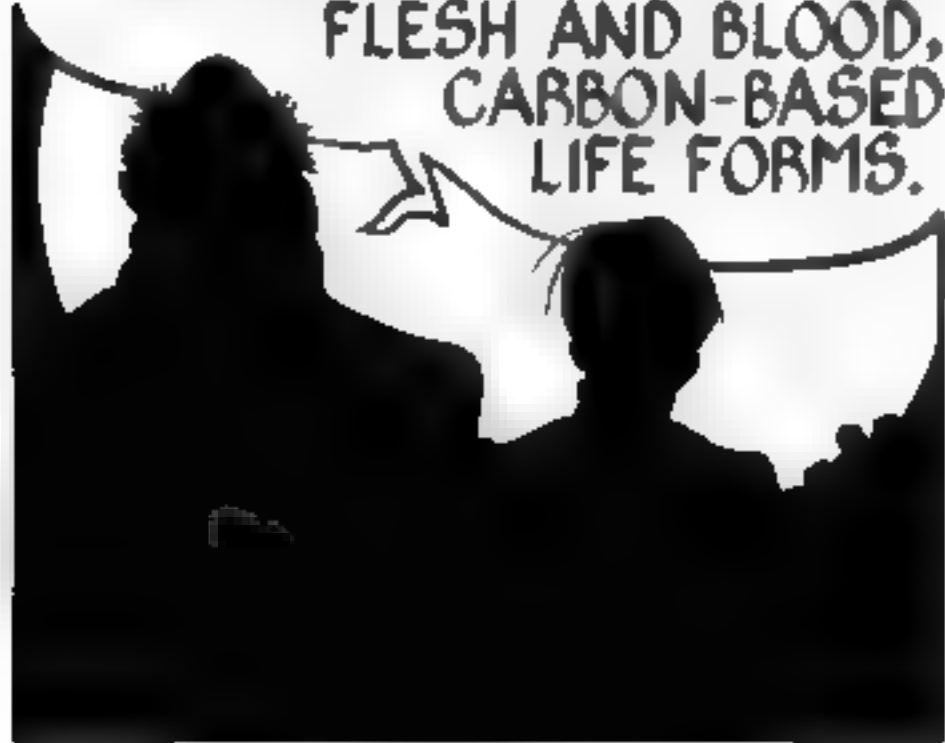


SAME-OLD,  
SAME-OLD...

SAME-OLD,  
SAME-OLD.



IT HAS TAKEN A VERY LONG  
TIME TO ESTABLISH A TRUE  
RAPPORT WITH THE PEOPLES  
OF YOUR PLANET. EVEN NOW,  
INTER-ENTITY COMMUNI-  
CATION IS ARDUOUS AT  
BEST, GIVEN THAT YOU ARE  
FLESH AND BLOOD,  
CARBON-BASED  
LIFE FORMS.



AND  
WHAT ARE  
THE PEOPLE OF  
YOUR WORLD?



Brooke

TOFU.



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SILLY  
OF ME  
TO ASK.



*Brooks*

...ah...

.....ah...

...ah.....

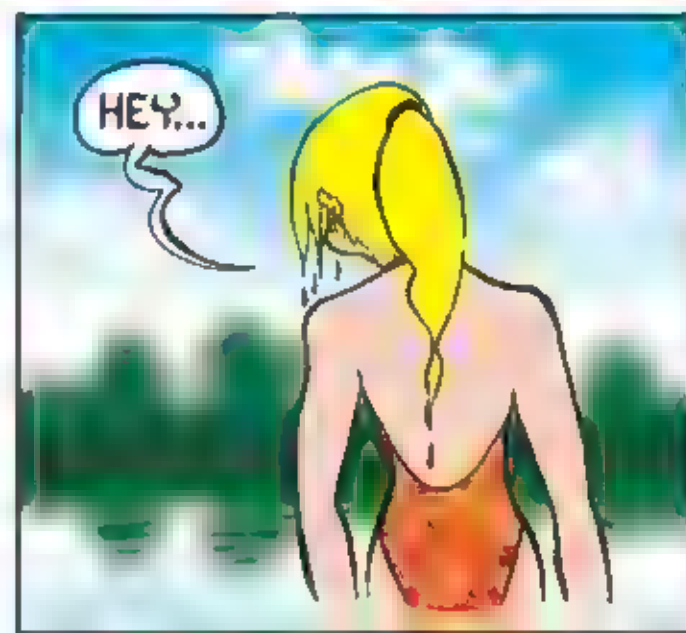
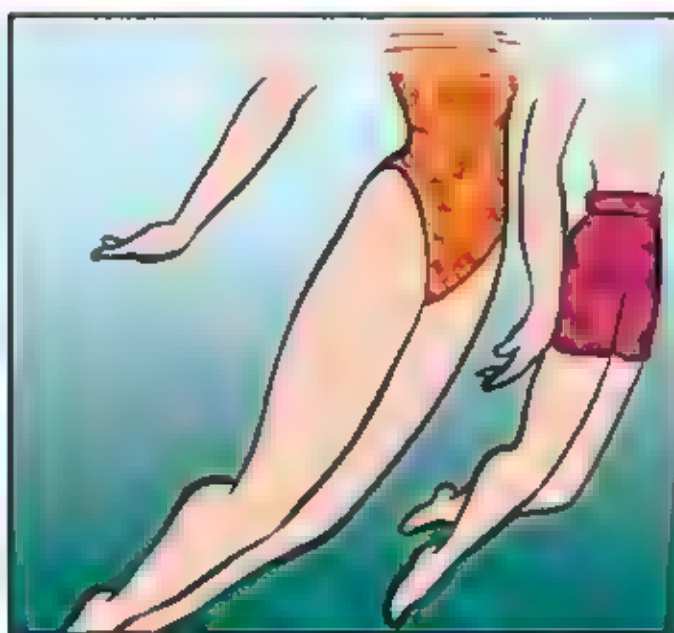
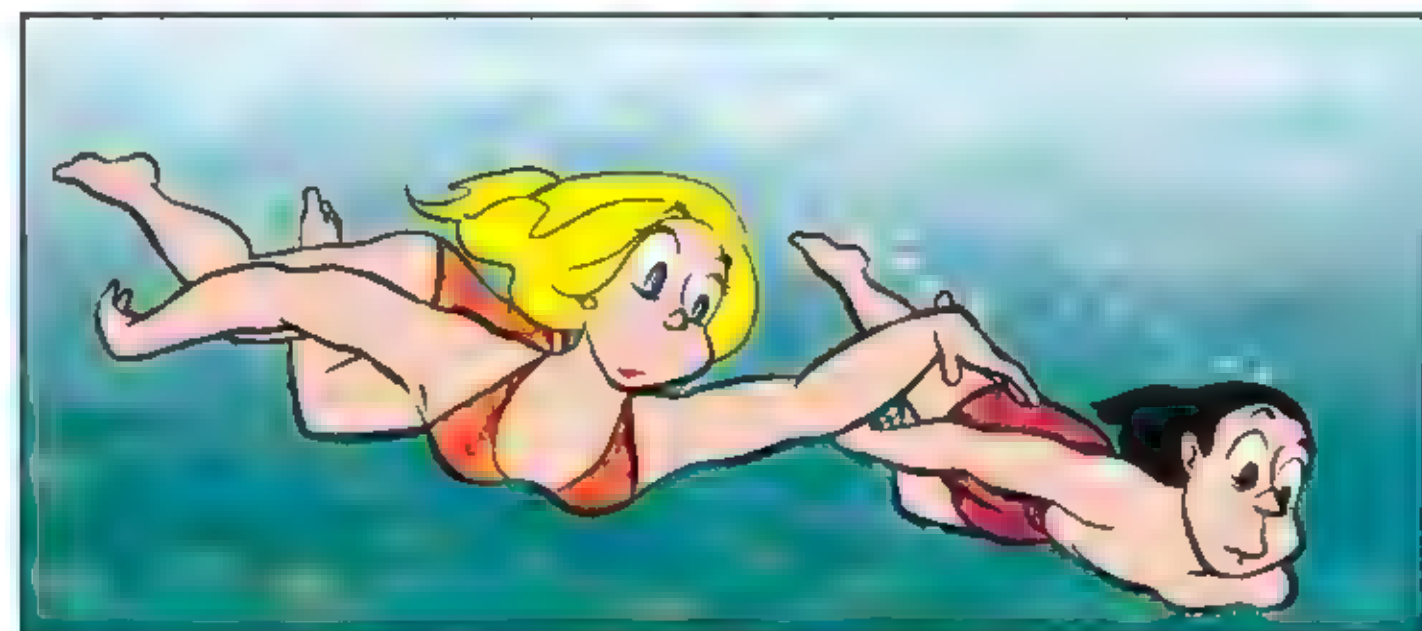
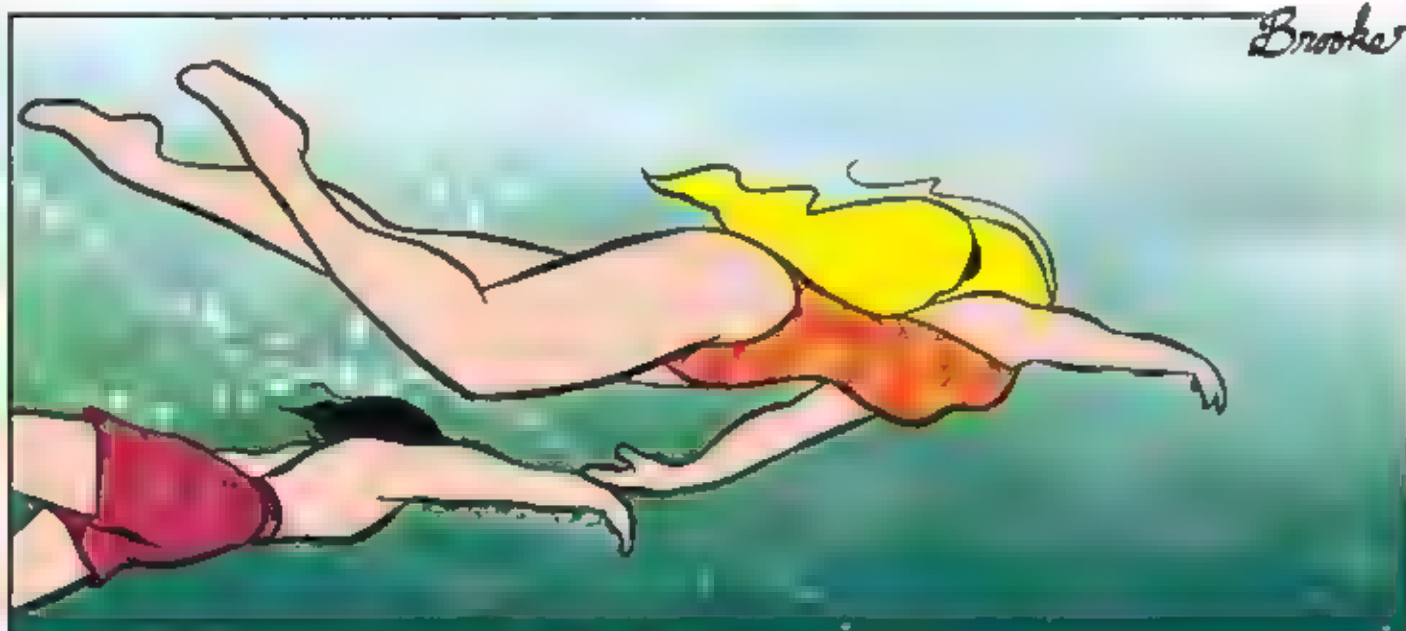
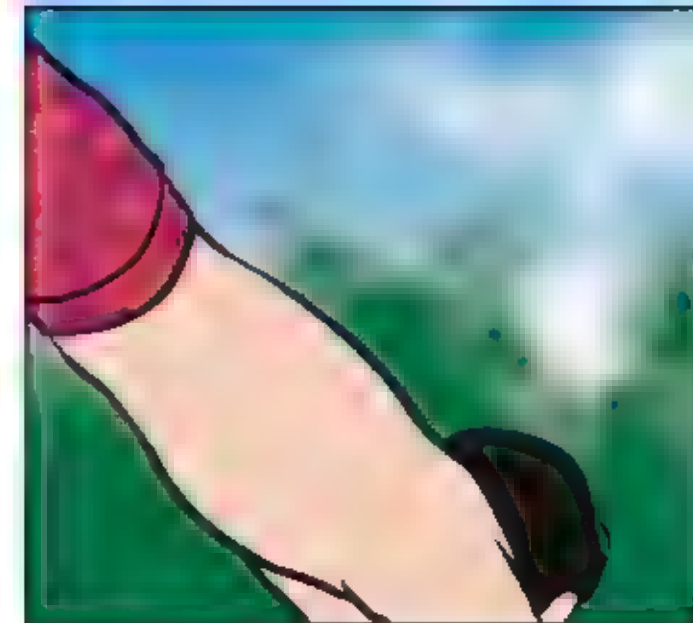
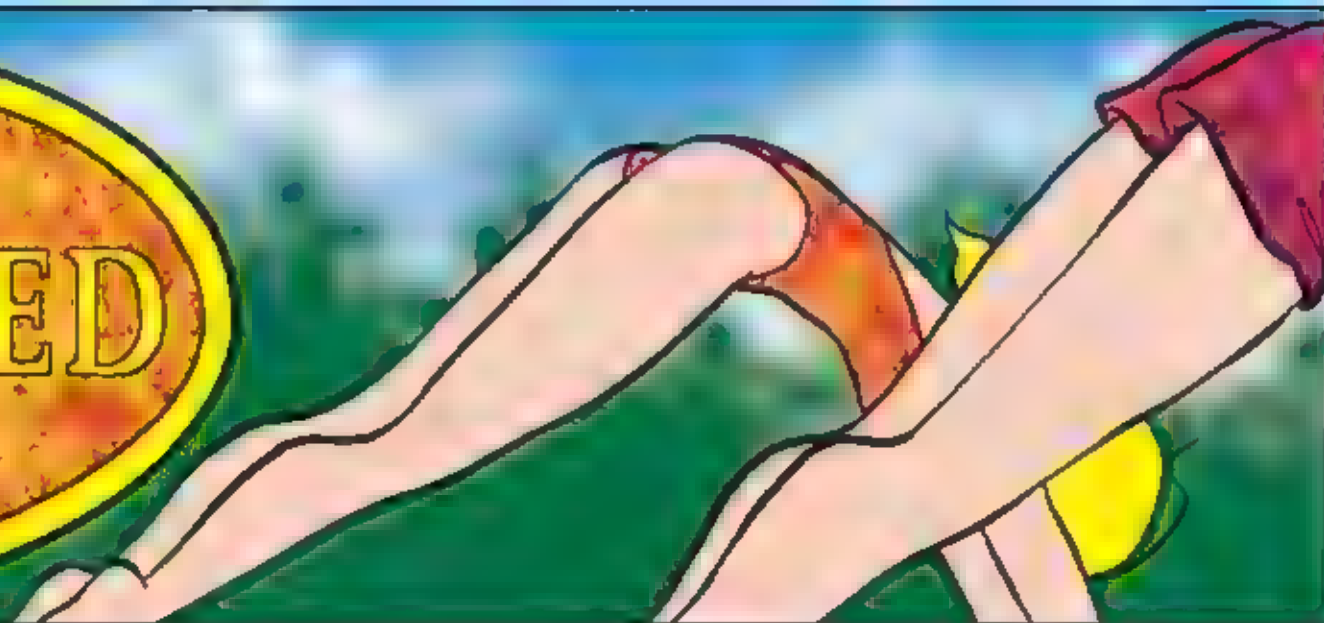
IF YOU WILL PERMIT ME,  
OUR CONVERSATION LAPSED  
FIVE MINUTES AGO, YET  
YOU CONTINUE TO INTER-  
MITTENTLY REPEAT THE  
WORD "AH" WITH THE  
INFLECTION YOU ADOPT  
WHEN YOU ARE BEING SUB-  
JECTED TO THE LUNATIC  
RAMBLINGS OF A POSSIBLY  
DANGEROUS  
WACKO.

WHY  
WAIT?

PRAGMATIC.

ah.





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I GUESS YOU MUST KNOW  
THE NEW OWNER  
OF YOUR  
FARM.



INDEED...  
DR. BURBER  
AND I ARE OLD  
ACQUAINTANCES.

DR. BURBER?









I'M SORRY, I DON'T  
ORDINARILY FORGET MY  
NAME AND ACT LIKE A  
CORNERED COCKROACH.  
IT'S JUST A QUALITY  
YOU BRING OUT IN ME!

Brooke

SETTING ASIDE  
THE FLATTERY,  
I GATHER WE  
HAVE MET?

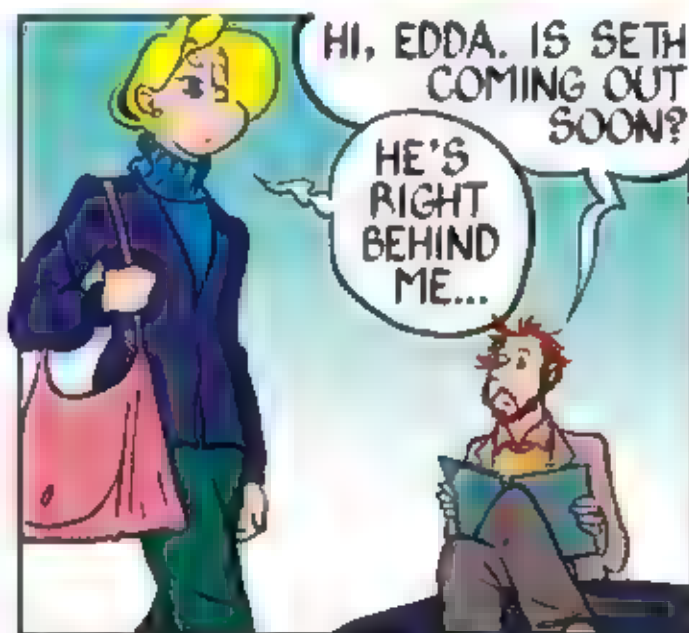
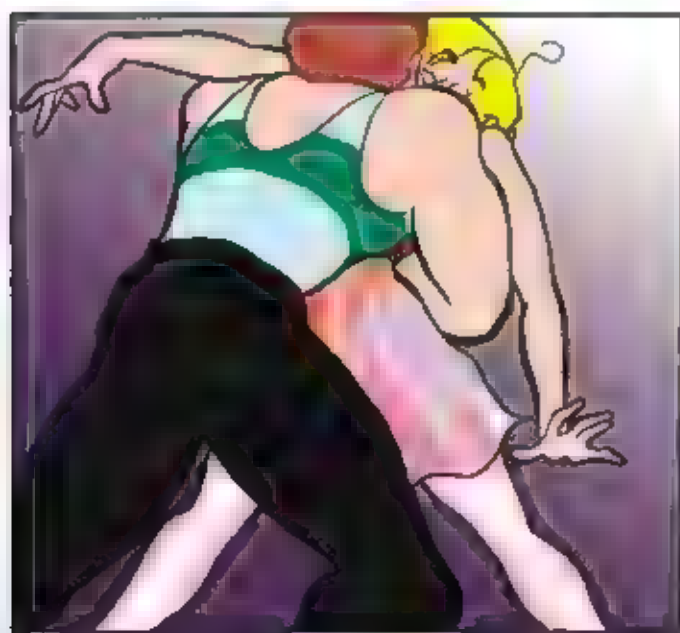
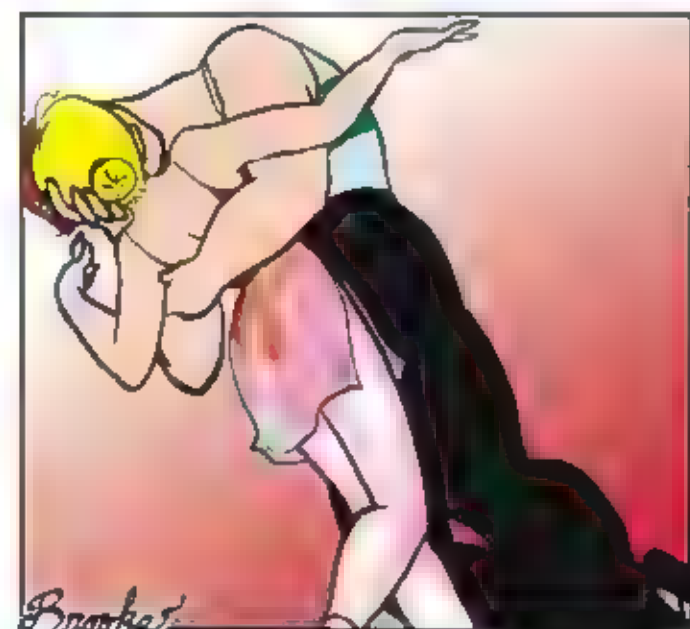
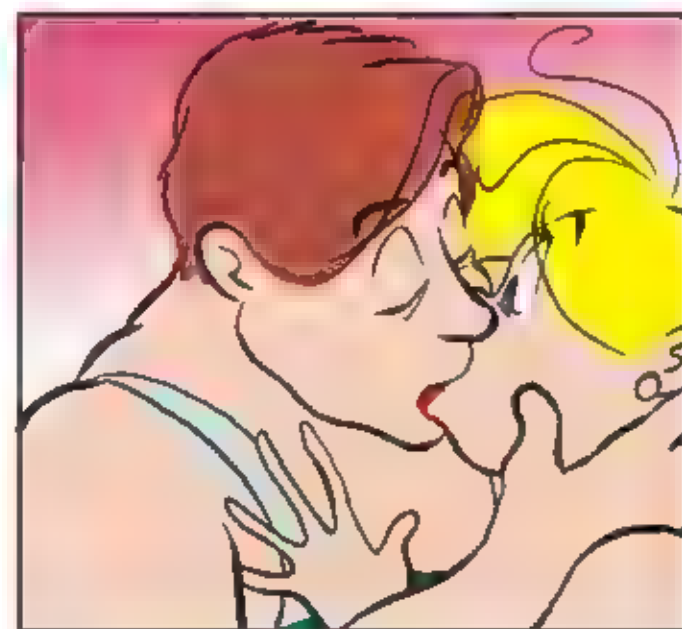
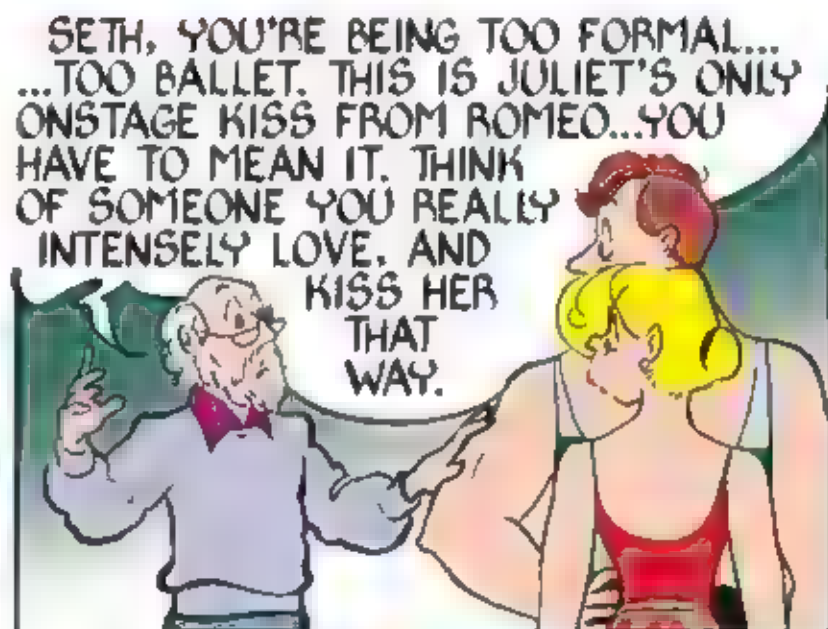
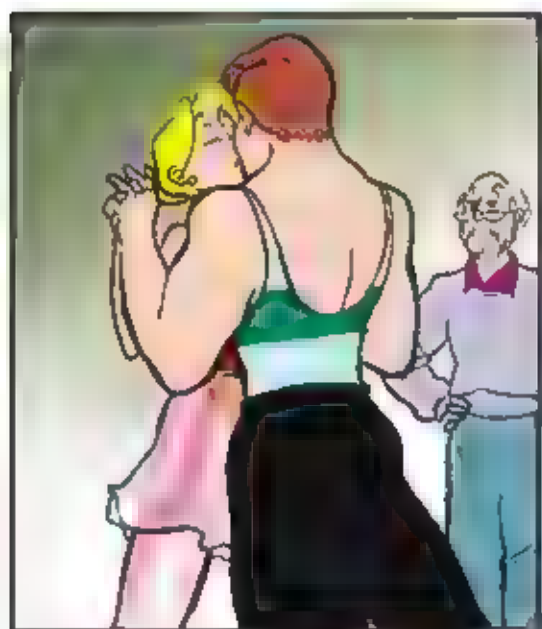
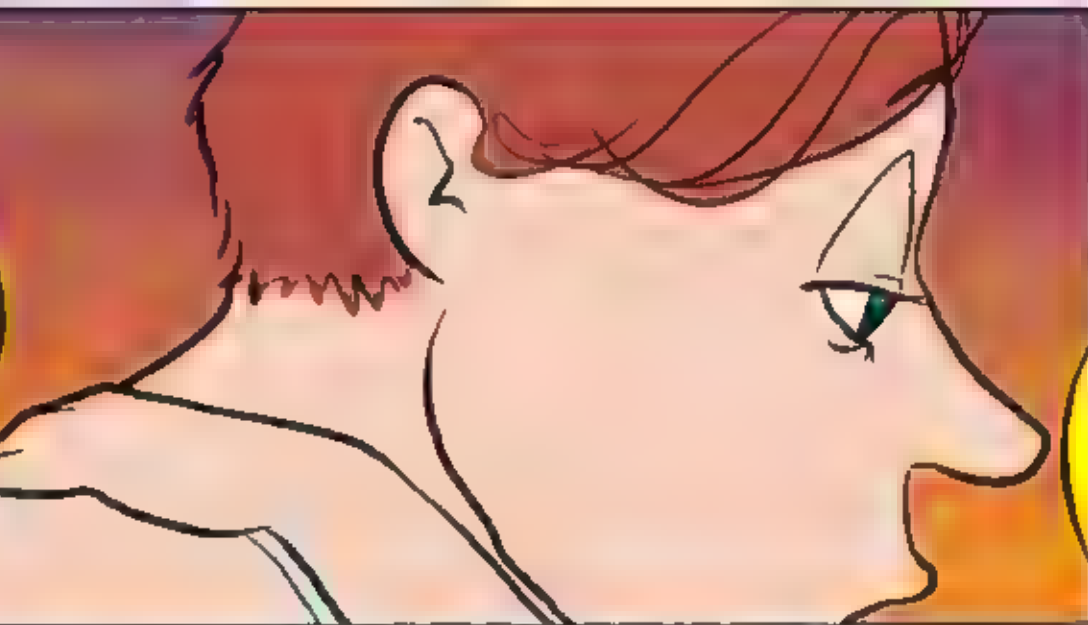
MY NAME IS  
FLEURRIE SPOCKET.  
BUT YOU WON'T  
REMEMBER ME.

BIO CLASS...  
THE MOUTHBREATHER  
IN THE BACK ROW!

OH, PLEASE,  
DON'T REMEMBER  
ME!







BEFORE YOU DEFEND YOUR PRECIOUS  
BULL FROM ME WITH THE AXE OR  
SHOVEL OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE  
REACHING FOR...



...LET ME POINT  
OUT THAT YOU HAVE  
A SICK ANIMAL, IT'S THREE  
A.M., AND I AM A QUALIFIED VET.



SO, ARE YOU STILL A  
NARCOLEPTIC MOUTH-  
BREATH?



ARE YOU STILL  
A SOULLESS  
BANSHEE?

I DON'T KNOW  
IF I WANT YOU  
TREATING  
MY  
BULL.

YOU HAVE  
AN ANIMAL IN  
DISTRESS.

SO  
SHUT  
UP  
AND  
LET  
ME  
DO  
MY  
JOB.

*Brooke*

HM...  
...THAT'S  
PRETTY  
GOOD.

WHAT?

I GOT TO TELL YOU  
TO SHUT UP.

Art by JFS Inc



OKAY, MARCEL SWEETIE...  
...FLEURRIE'S JUST  
GOING TO CHECK  
YOUR TONGUE.



HOLD UP HIS HEAD.







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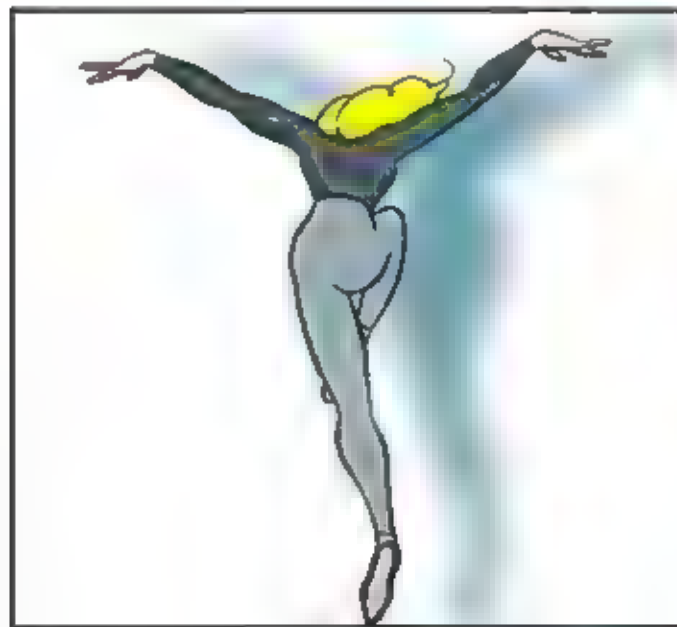
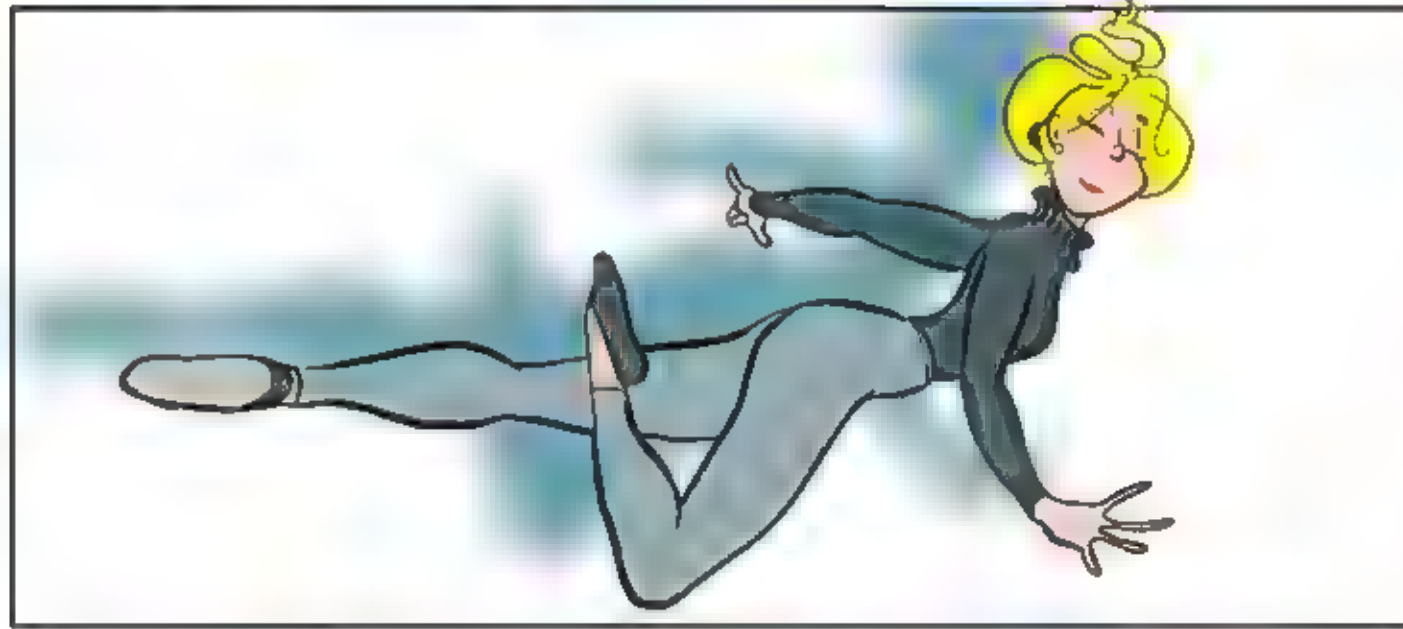






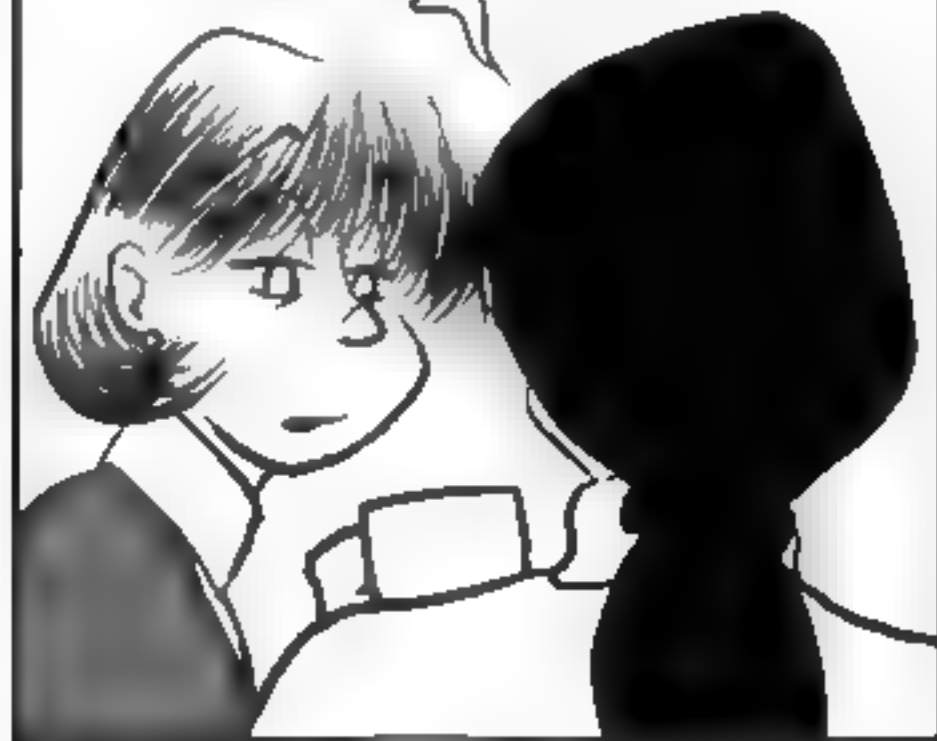
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FOR ME, YOUR CLASS WAS  
A TURNING POINT...IT WAS  
AT THAT TIME I REALIZED  
I WANTED TO BE A VET.  
...THEN YOU NEARLY  
FLUNKED ME.



YOU DIDN'T USE A GRADE  
CURVE. PREMEDS WERE  
WASHING OUT. YOU SAID,  
IF WE GOT A's WE'D  
KNOW IT WAS  
BECAUSE WE  
WERE THE  
BEST...  
...NOT  
THE  
LEAST  
BAD.



THAT WAS  
THE KIND  
OF VET  
I WANTED  
TO BE.

AND  
ARE  
YOU?



BULLS AND  
BULLDOGS DON'T  
GRADE ON A CURVE.  
ADEQUACY ISN'T  
AN OPTION.





SO WHERE DID YOU GO  
TO VET SCHOOL?



CUMMINGS, AT TUFTS...  
...AND I DON'T THINK I  
WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IN IF  
IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU.

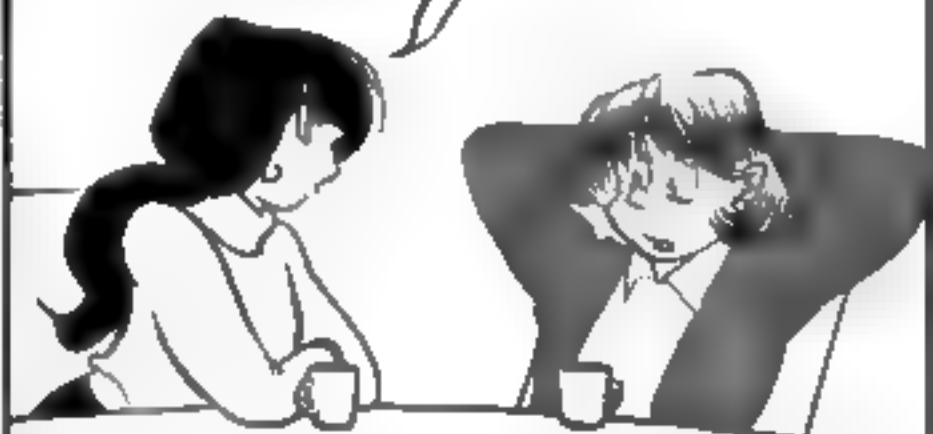
YOU WERE SO  
UNCOMPROMISING  
AND ROTTEN  
AND MEAN...



*Brooke*



FOR YEARS I'VE  
WANTED TO TELL  
YOU OFF, AND  
THANK YOU.



OH, ANY  
TIME.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN ME ON MY ROUNDS SOMETIME...  
...SEE WHAT A FORMER STUDENT HAS DONE WITH HERSELF.  
HOW ABOUT TUESDAY AT SIX?

SIX A.M.? I DON'T REALLY...

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IT'LL JUST BE ME AND SVEN.

...SVEN?

TINY HIPS, HUGE SHOULDERS?  
HE USED TO CLEAN MY GUTTERS.

YES, WELL, HE'S A VETERINARY TECHNICIAN THESE DAYS...HE DOES "TECHNICAL" THINGS FOR ME, LIKE CARRY WHOLE BULLS.

I'LL BE THERE AT SIX SHARP.

Brooke

OKAY, SVEN...  
COULD YOU STACK  
THOSE BALES OF  
HAY RIGHT OVER  
THERE?



EVEN THOUGH IT'S GETTING  
COLDER, SVEN STILL TAKES  
OFF HIS SHIRT FOR THE  
HEAVIER JOBS.



AUTUMN IS  
A LOVELY TIME  
OF YEAR.



OKAY, SVEN...YOU'RE GOING  
TO NEED TO STRIP TO THE  
WAIST FOR THIS JOB.



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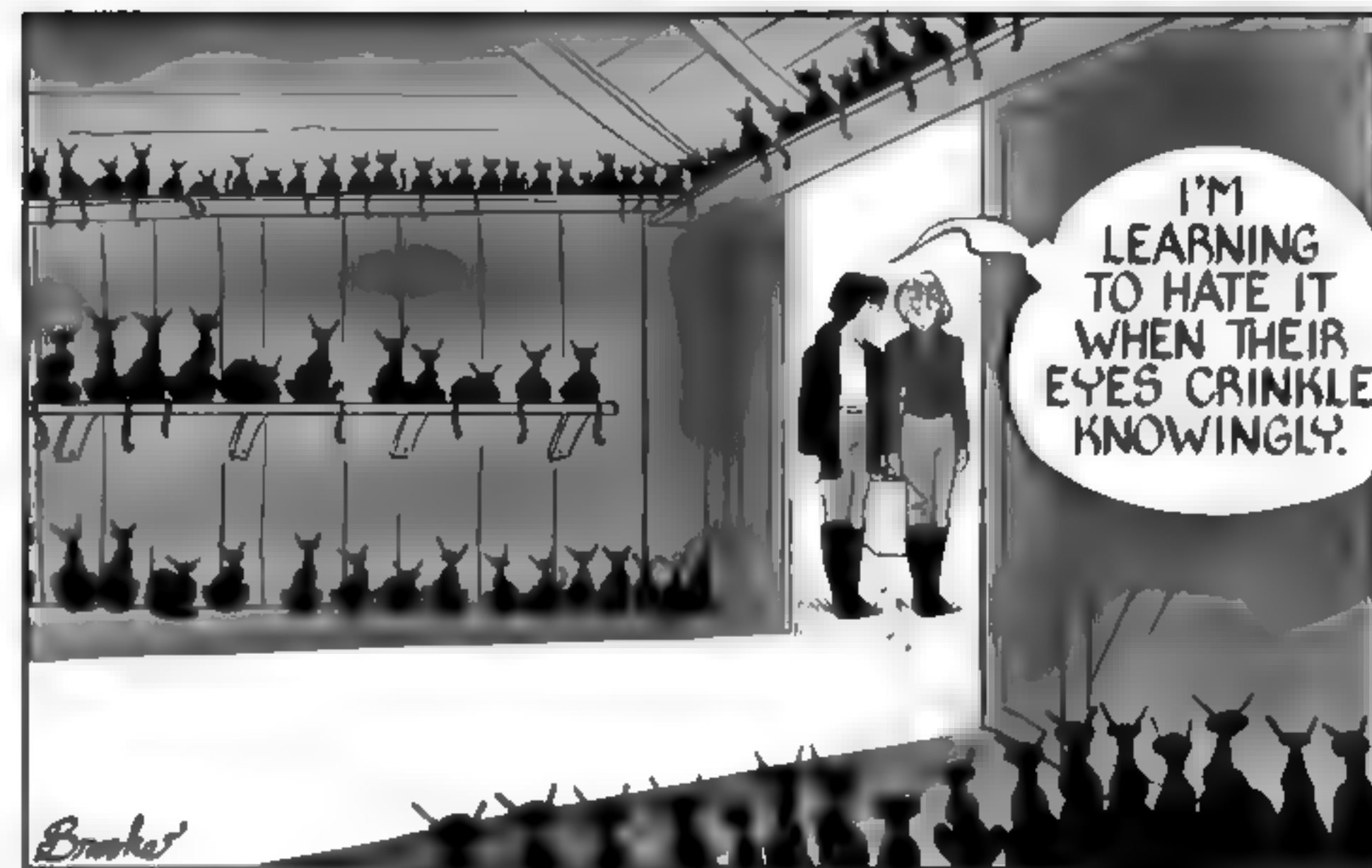
*Broke*



RIGHT...  
...YOU CAN  
PUT YOUR  
SHIRT ON.

MAY I TAKE  
THIS MOMENT  
TO SAY I LIKE  
YOUR STYLE?

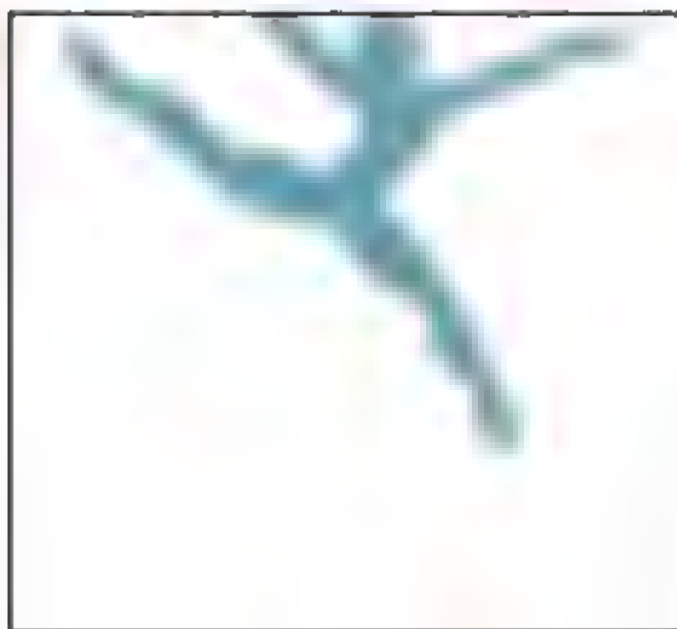








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I'VE JUST BEEN GOING  
AROUND WITH HER  
ON HER ROUNDS.  
IT'S BEEN  
REALLY  
FASCIN-  
ATING.

VETERINARY  
PRACTICE  
INVOLVES  
A GREAT  
DEAL OF  
FLEXIBILITY.



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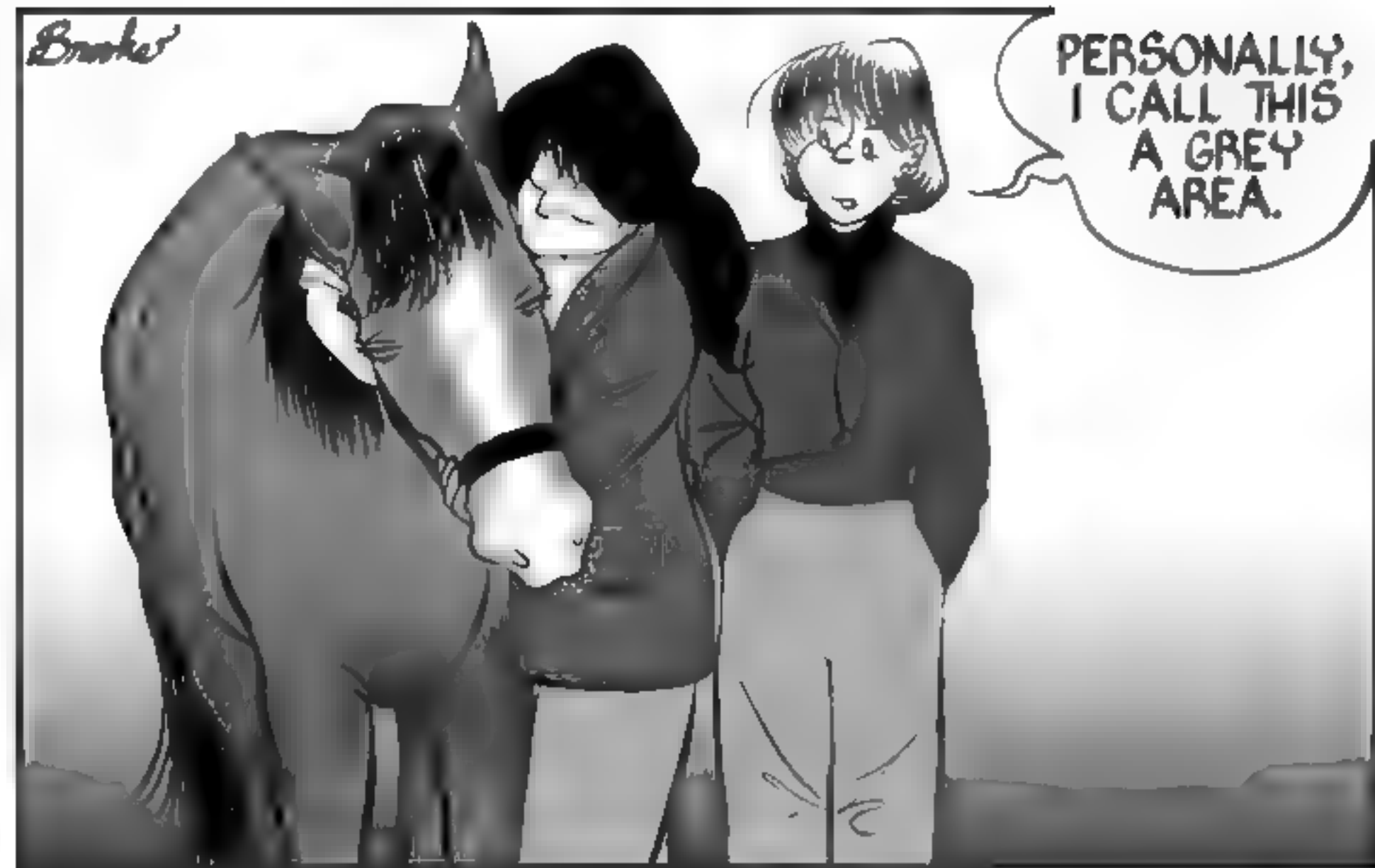
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IN WHAT  
SENSE?



IN BEARING  
THIS MIND THAT  
MY MEDICINE ISN'T  
MY SPECIALTY,  
MY PROFESSIONAL  
OPINION IS  
THAT BARBIE'S  
CUD IS LODGED  
IN HER FOURTH  
STOMACH.





I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU  
BEAR LIVING HERE WITH THAT  
WACKO OLD MAN POPPING  
INCESSANTLY OUT OF THE  
LANDSCAPE TO BLURT  
PITHY NON  
SEQUITURS  
...THEN  
VANISH.

Brooke

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OH, IT'S  
NOT LIKE  
THAT  
AT ALL.

STERN RESOLVE IS WHAT  
A PEOPLE DISPLAY WHEN  
FLEEING HAS BEEN  
REMOVED  
AS AN  
OPTION.

ALL RIGHT...IT IS  
LIKE THAT.

HAVE YOU  
CONSIDERED  
A COLLAR WITH  
A BELL?

SO HAVE YOU DONE ANY-  
THING TO WEAN THORAX  
OFF APPEARING OUT OF  
NOWHERE TO  
UTTER HIS  
PITHY  
EPIGRAMS?

WELL,  
I...

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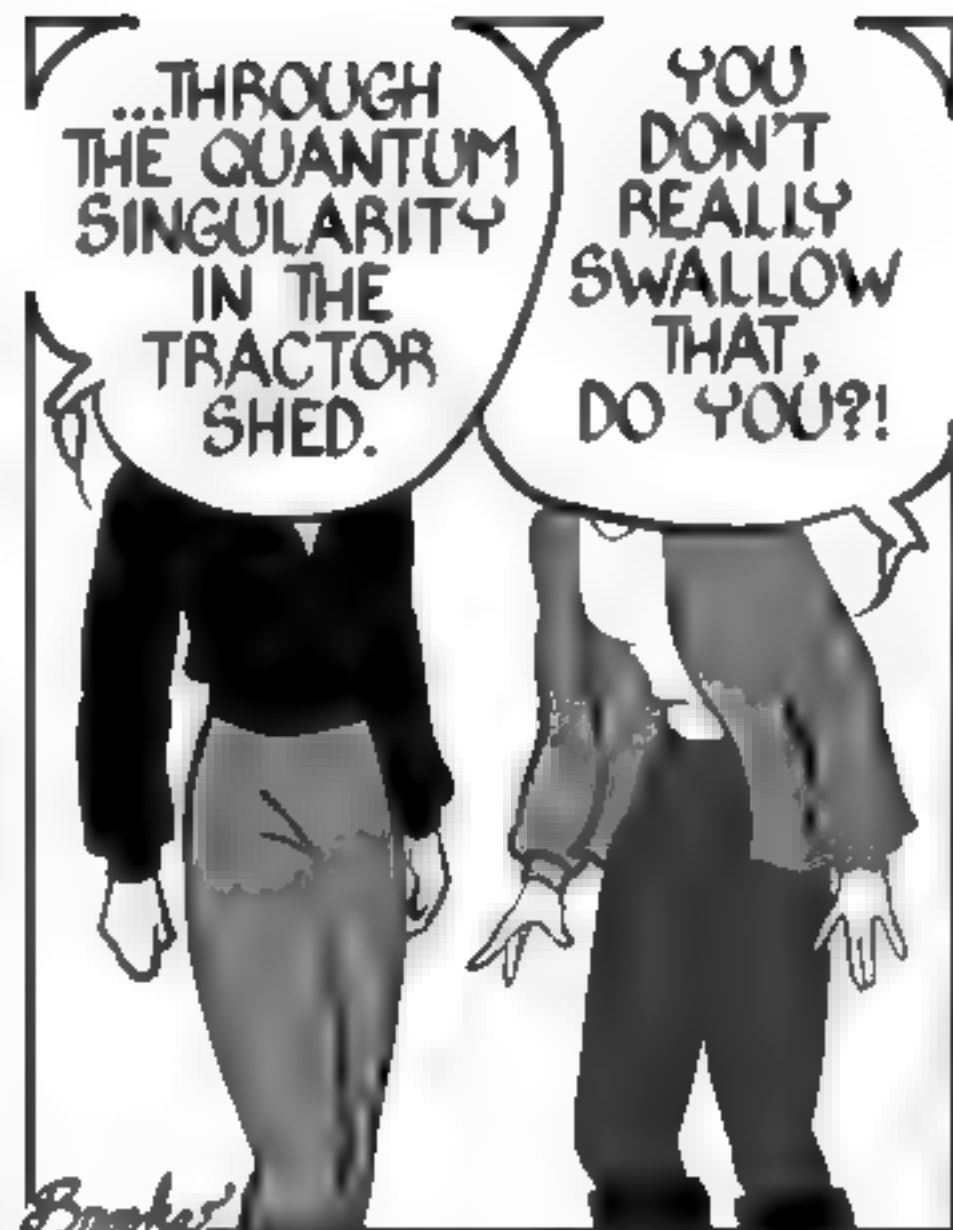
SIN IS AN ACT OF  
MORAL TURPITUDE  
WITH AN OPTION  
TO RENEW.

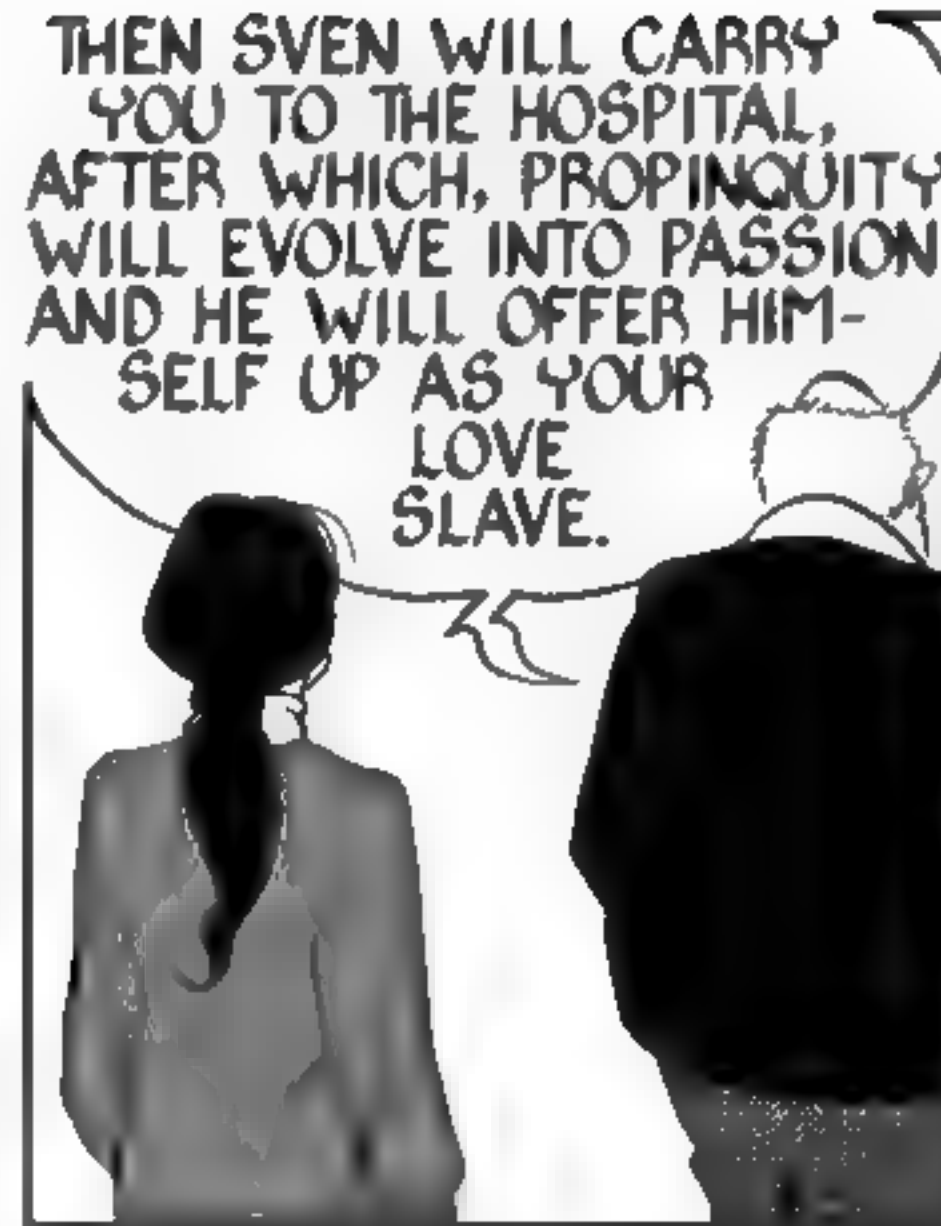
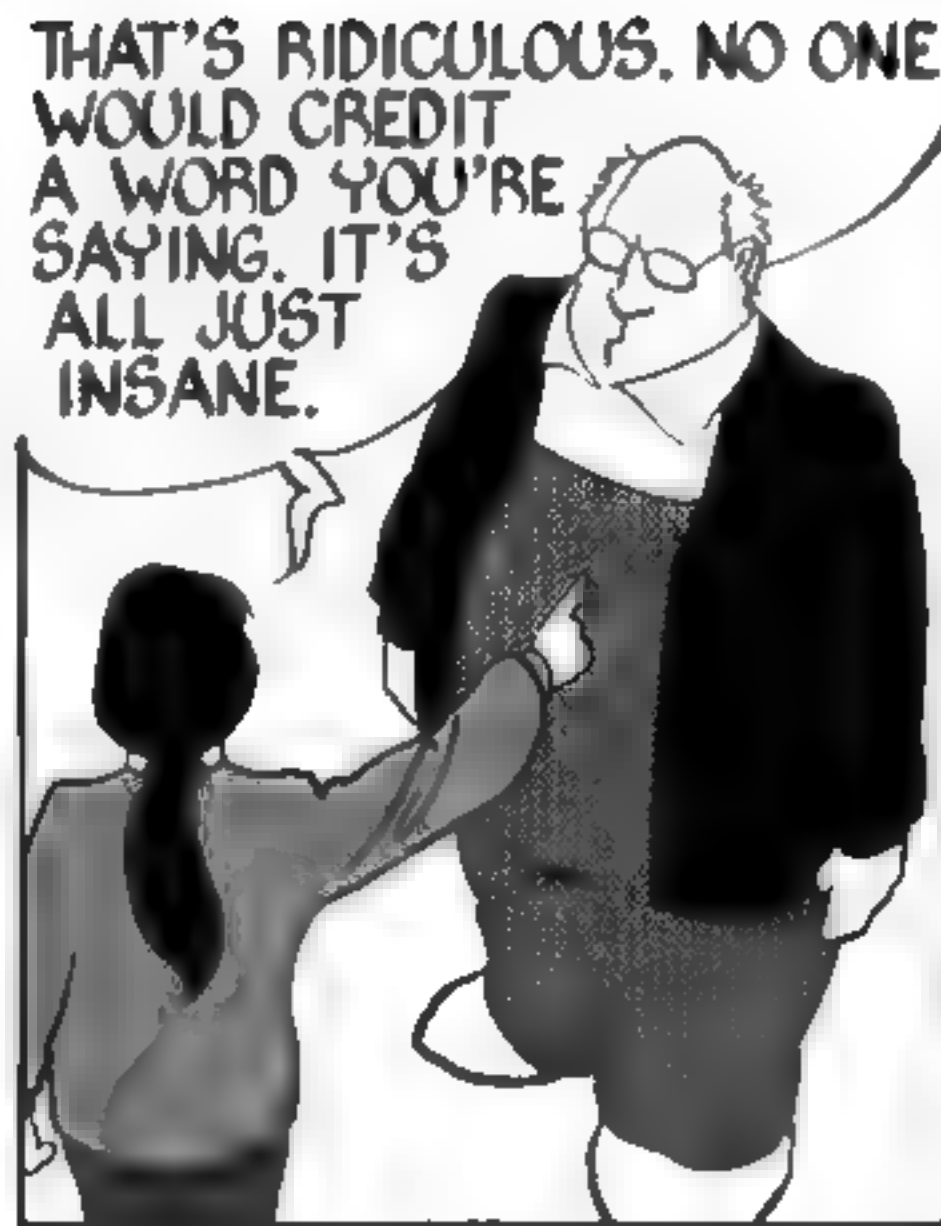
*Brooke*

YOU'RE  
WRITING  
THAT  
DOWN?!

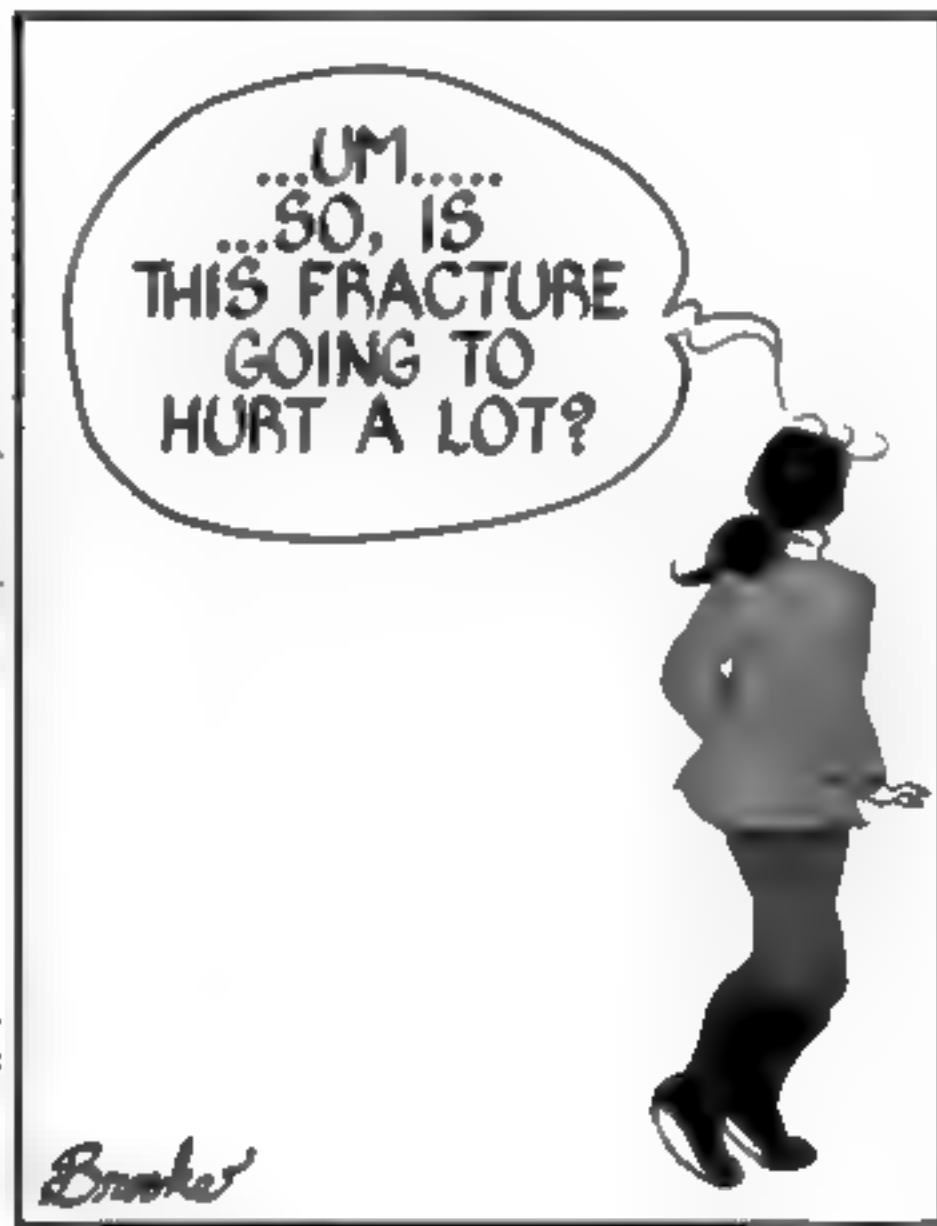
IT  
WASN'T  
BAD.

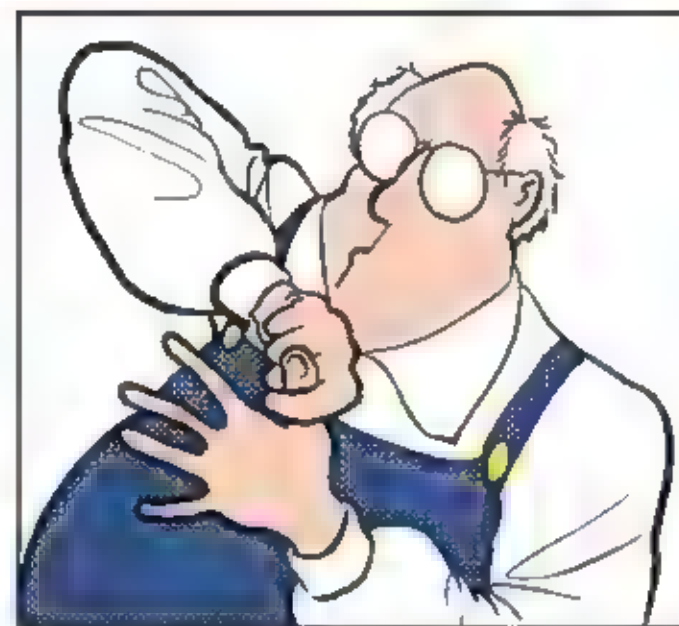
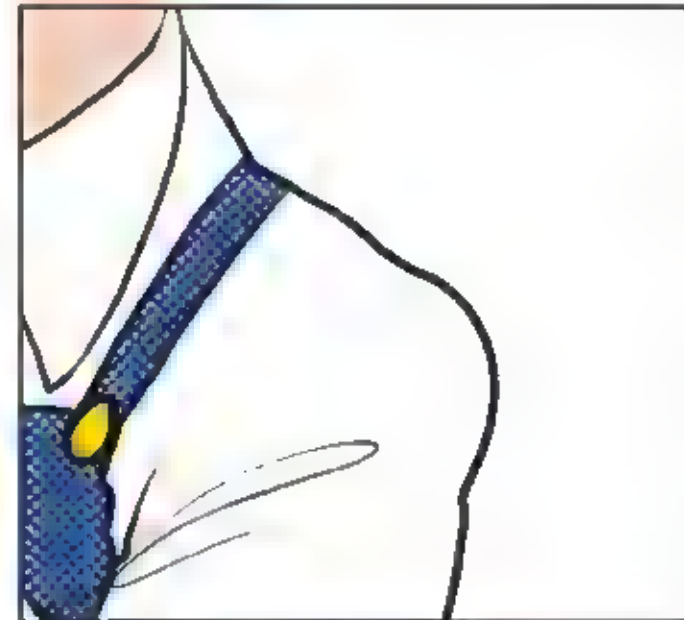
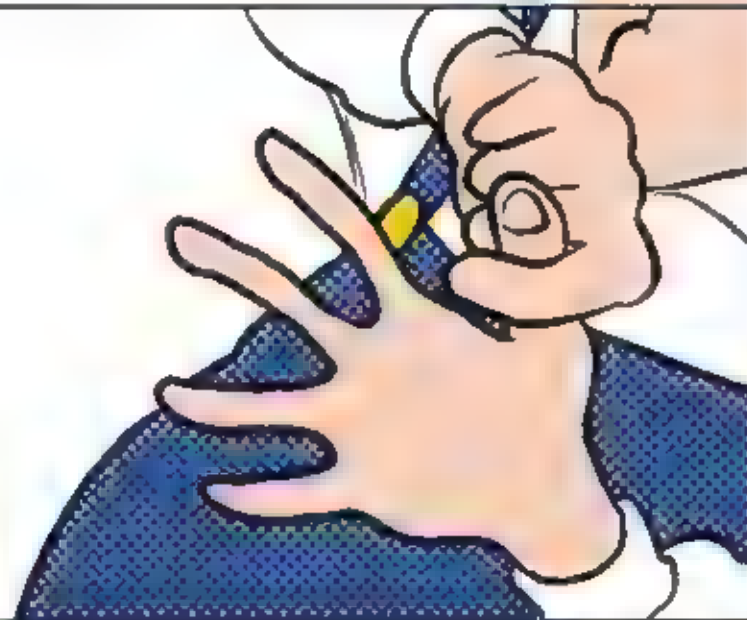






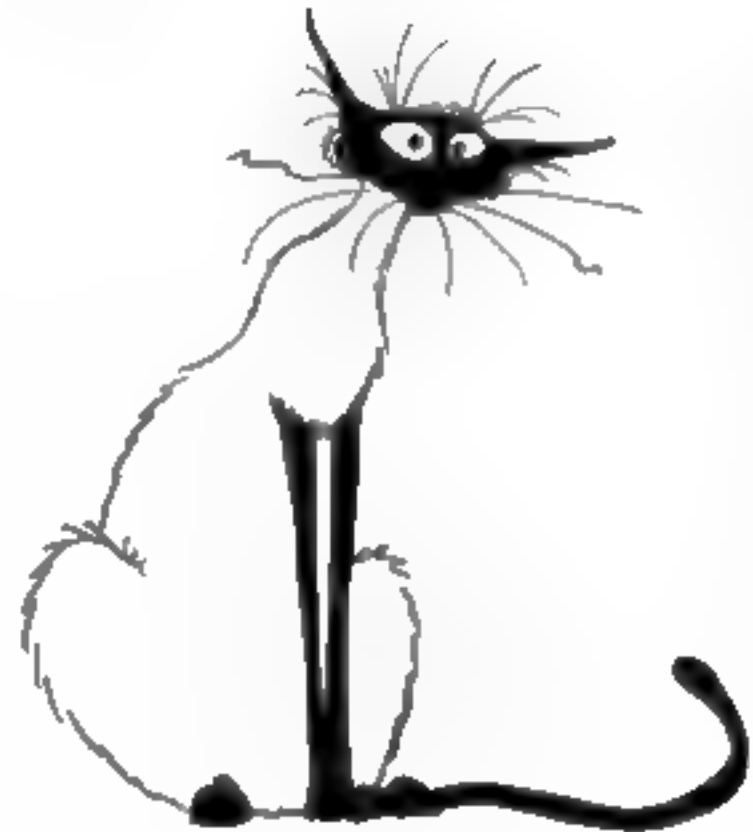
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HOW NOT TO  
CONVINCE THE  
MULTITUDE  
THAT YOU ARE  
A MESSIAH.

HALLMARKS  
OF FELINITY:  
THE CAT STARE



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I SEE INTO REALITIES  
BEYOND SUCH CONCEPTS  
OF TIME AND SPACE AS  
HUMANKIND PERCEIVES  
THEM...



...GLIMPSE THE GODHEAD,  
THE NEXUS OF EXISTENCE,  
THE MYSTERY OF CREATION,  
THE VERY CORE OF...

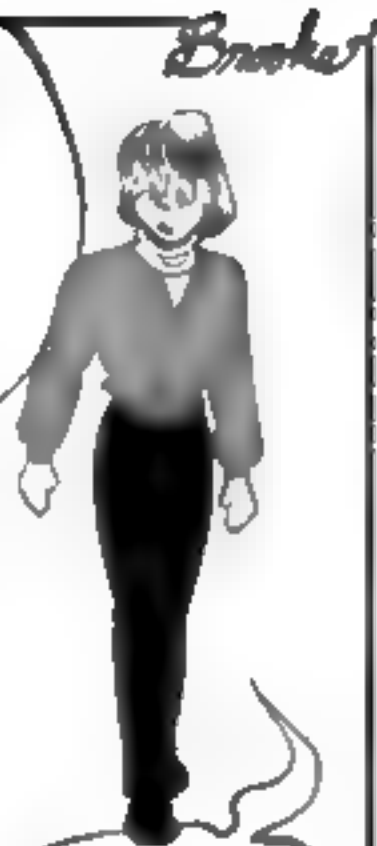


*Brooke*





YOU REALLY  
SHOULDN'T HAVE  
PREDICTED TO  
FLEURRIE THAT  
SHE'LL BREAK  
HER LEG.



IT WILL  
MAKE HER  
WARY OF  
EVERY MOVE  
SHE MAKES.

I DID NOT PREDICT IT.  
MY TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE  
HAS BEEN REARRANGED.  
WHAT IS HER FUTURE  
IS MY PAST.



TIME AND EXPERIENCE  
REVERSE AND REFLECT  
LIKE IMAGES IN A HABER-  
DASHER'S MIRROR.

FOR INSTANCE, I CAN SEE  
THROUGH THE ORIGAMI-  
LIKE FOLDS OF TIME YOU  
AND DR. GREENE, JOINED  
IN MATRIMONY.



YOU'RE  
FORETELLING  
SOMETHING THAT  
HAPPENED  
LAST YEAR.



SPOOKY,  
N'EST-CE  
PAS?





YOUR TROUBLE IS, YOU'RE  
INSANE. YOU WON'T COME  
TO GRIPS WITH  
REALITY.

WITH  
WHAT  
PART OF  
REALITY  
HAVE YOU  
COME TO  
GRIPS, DR.  
BURBER?



*Brooke*



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OKAY...  
...I TAKE  
BACK  
THE WORD  
"INSANE."

I'D RATHER YOU  
DIDN'T. I'M NOT  
DONE WITH IT  
YET.



WHAT YOU NEED IS SOME-  
THING CONSTRUCTIVE TO DO.  
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU  
DO THESE DAYS, NOW THAT  
YOU'VE SOLD THE FARM?



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*Brooke*

VOID  
WHERE  
PROHIBITED  
BY LAW.



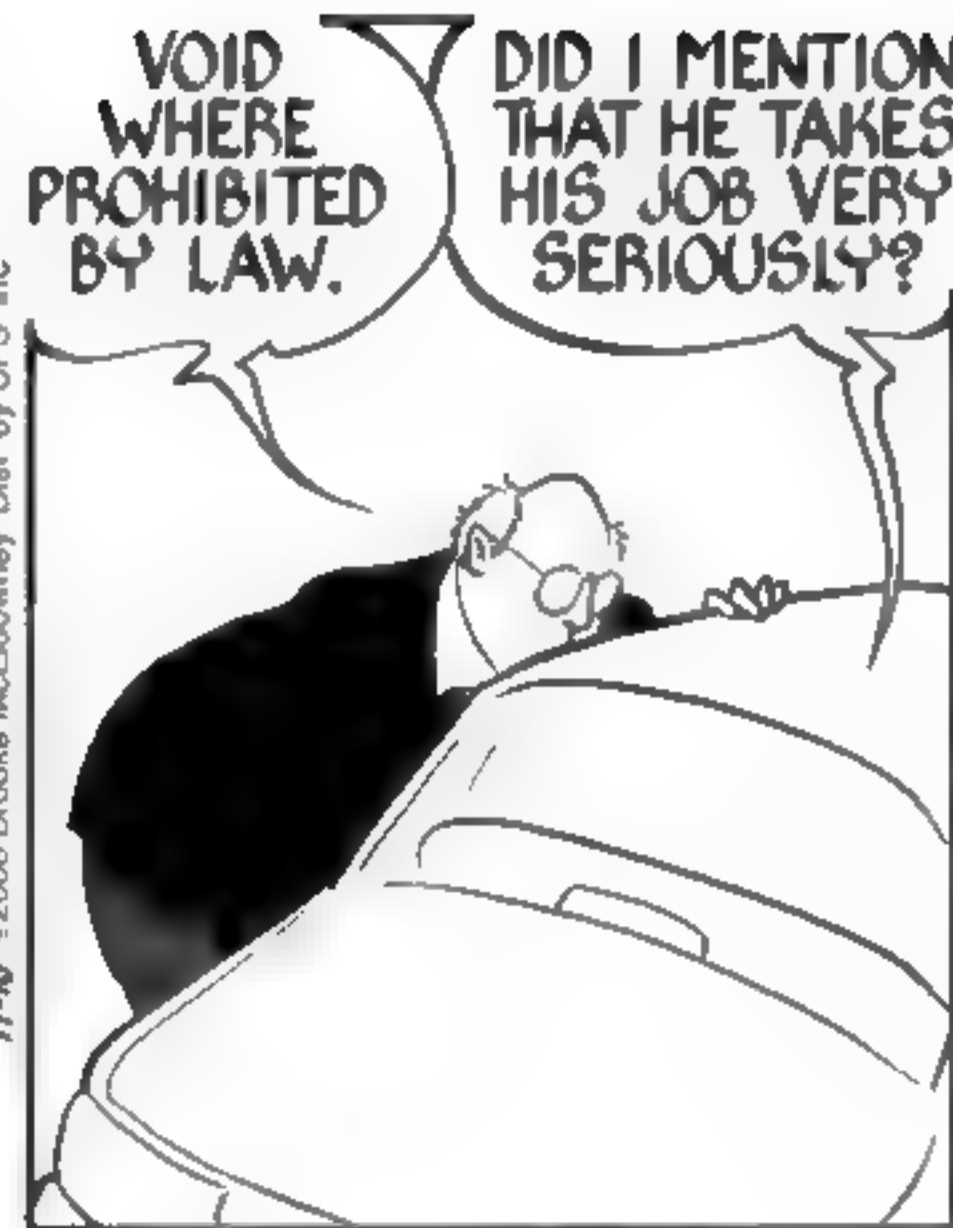
UM...

...WHAT?



THAT'S WHAT I DO...I'M THE  
VOICE, AT THE END OF ALL  
THOSE ADVERTISEMENTS,  
THAT SAYS, "VOID WHERE  
PROHIBITED BY LAW."





# Origin of the Species

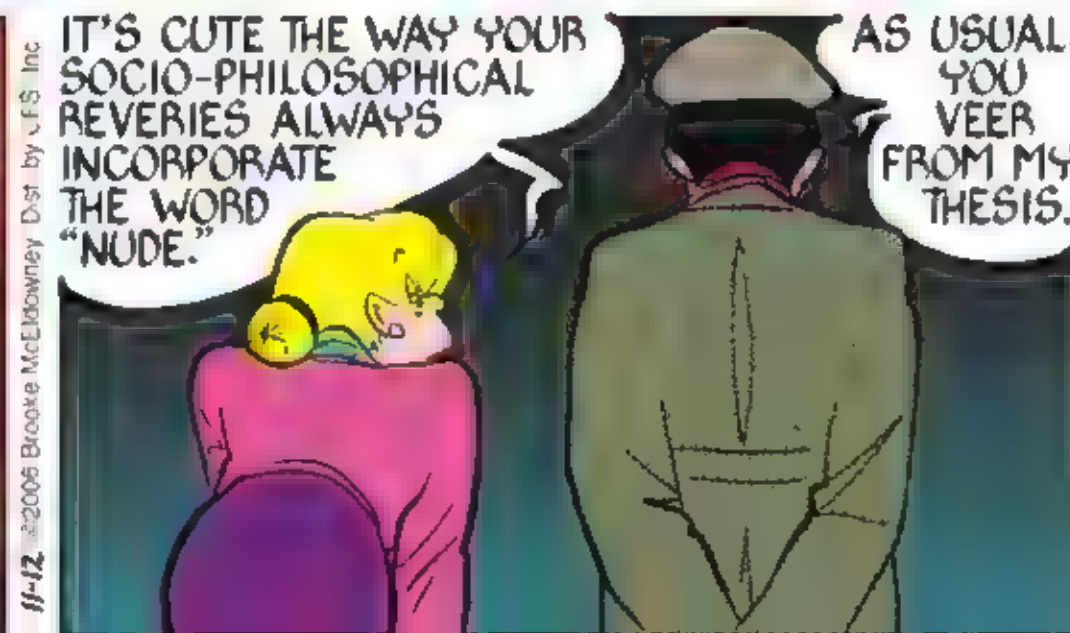
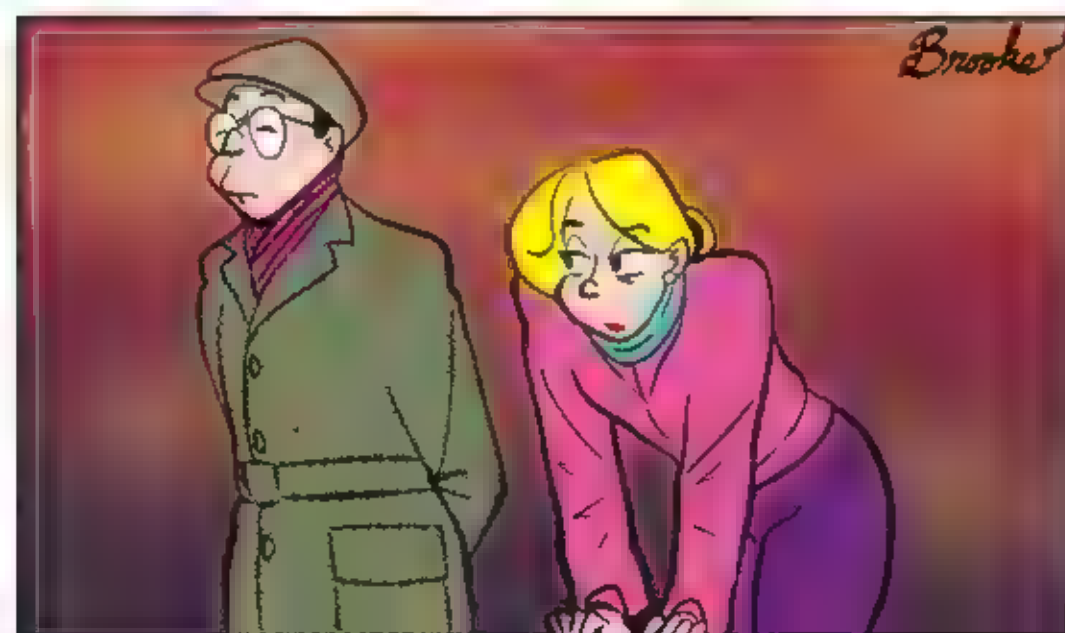
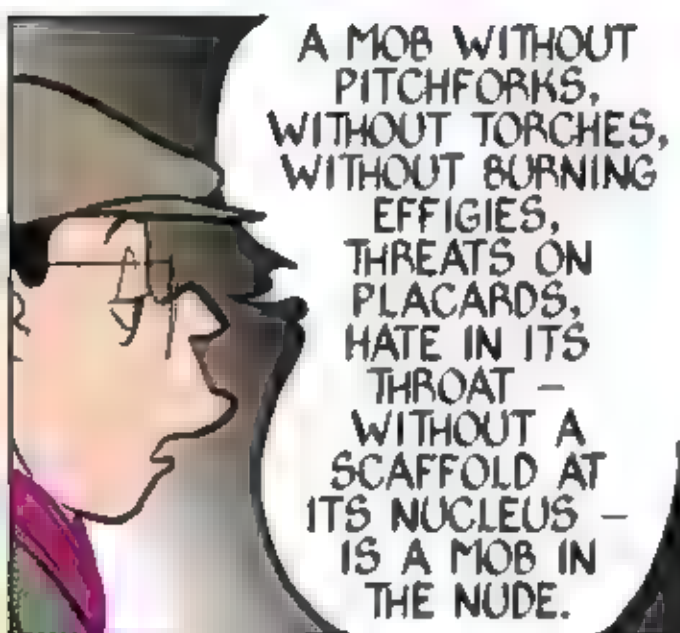
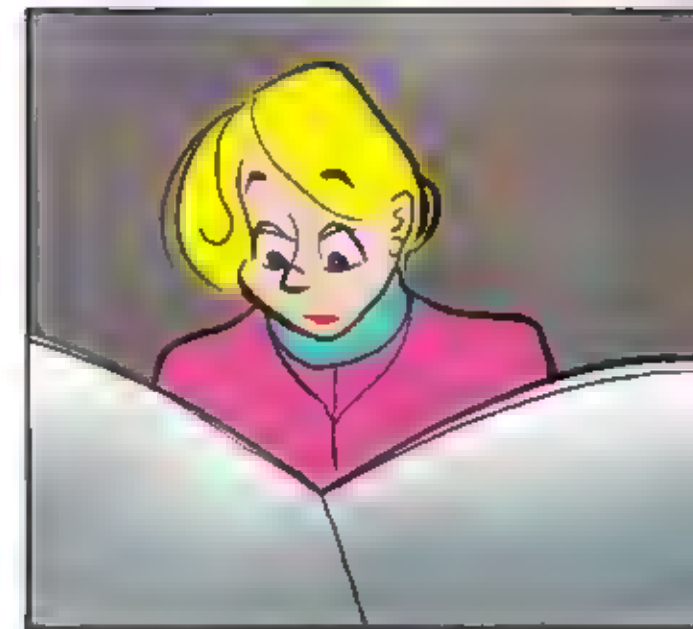


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Braker

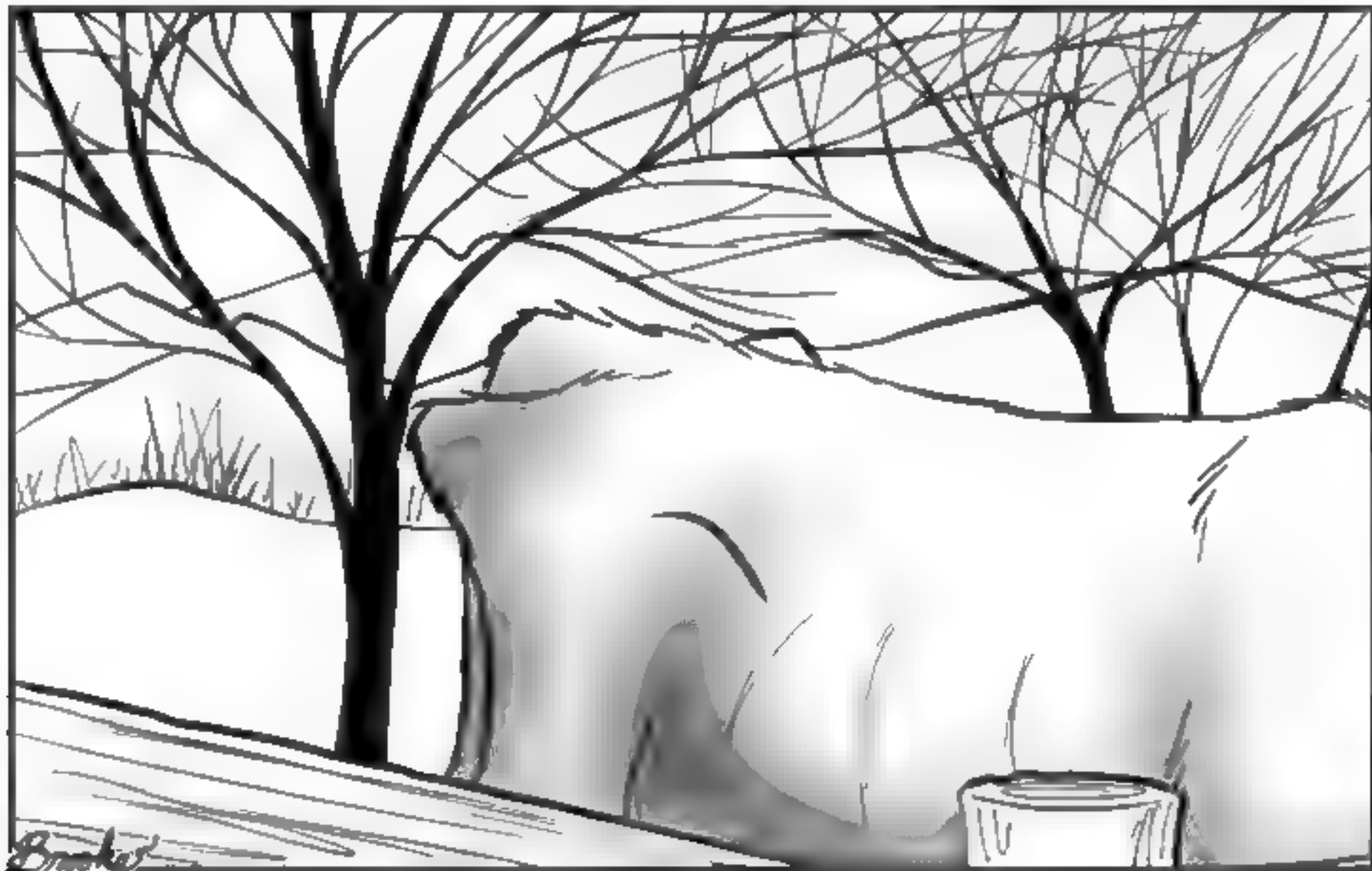












I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF  
CONDITIONER I BUY, OUTDOOR WORK GIVES ME THE MOST  
INCREDIBLE FRIZZIES.



I'M GLAD YOU HAVEN'T  
LET THORAX'S PREDICTION  
GET TO YOU.

I'M HARDLY GOING TO BUY  
INTO THE PROPOSITION  
THAT A LUNATIC RUSTIC  
HAS BUILT A PEEPHOLE  
INTO MY DESTINY BY  
GLIDING IN AND OUT  
OF THE FUTURE.

Brooke

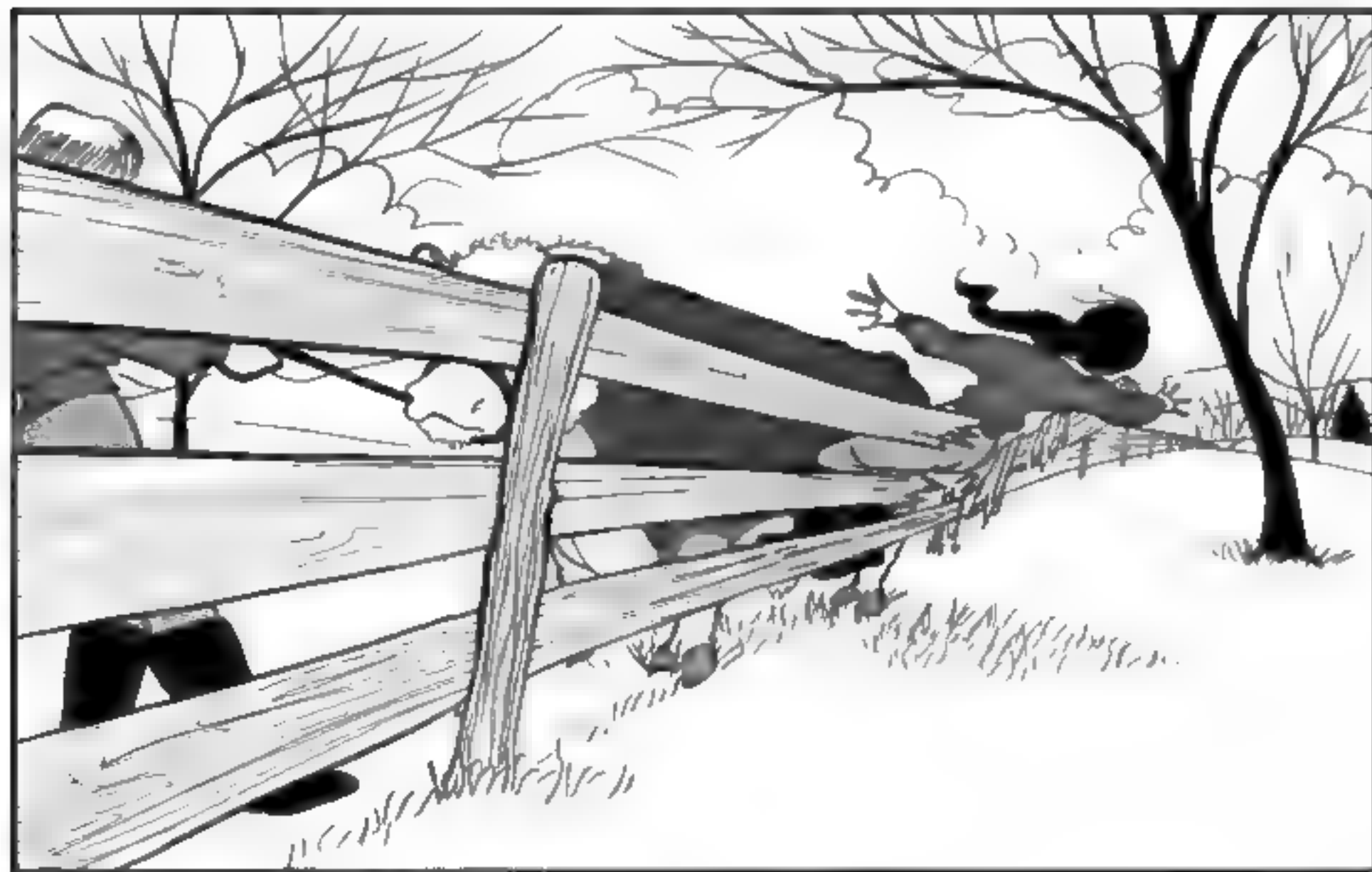


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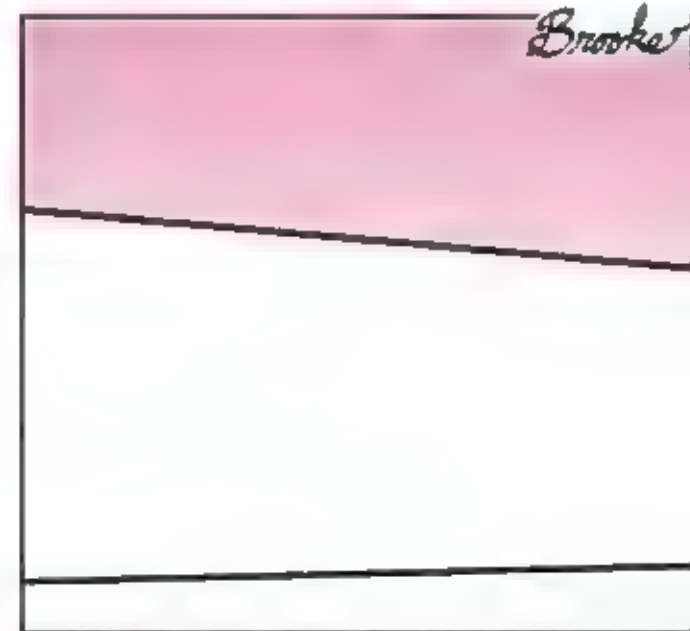
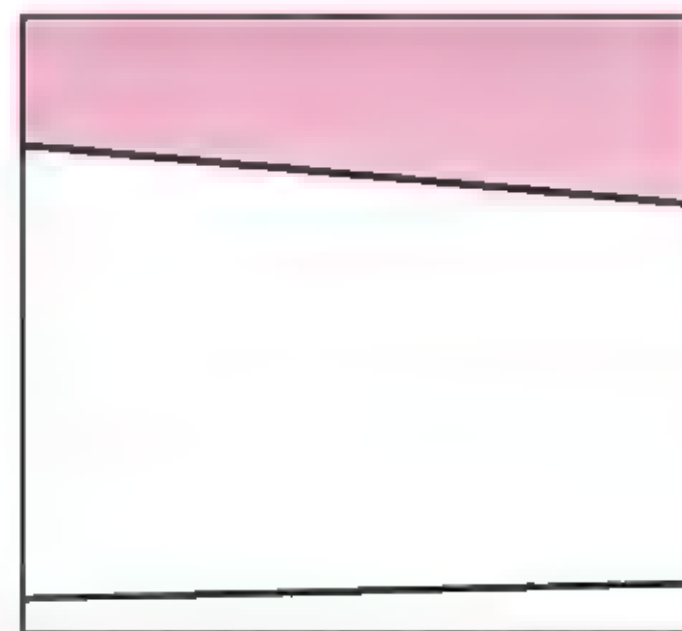
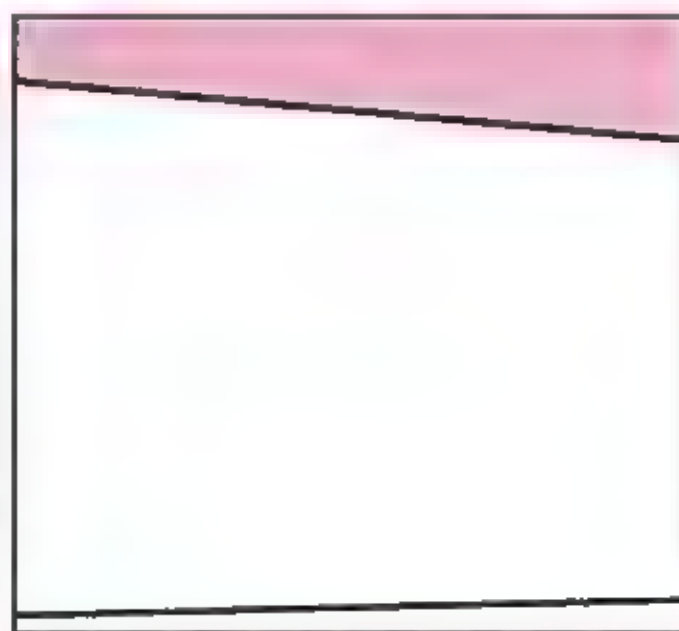




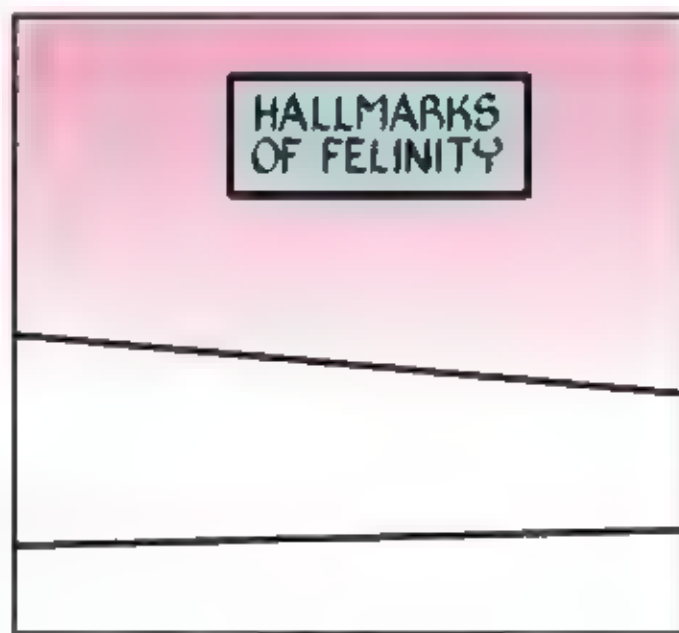




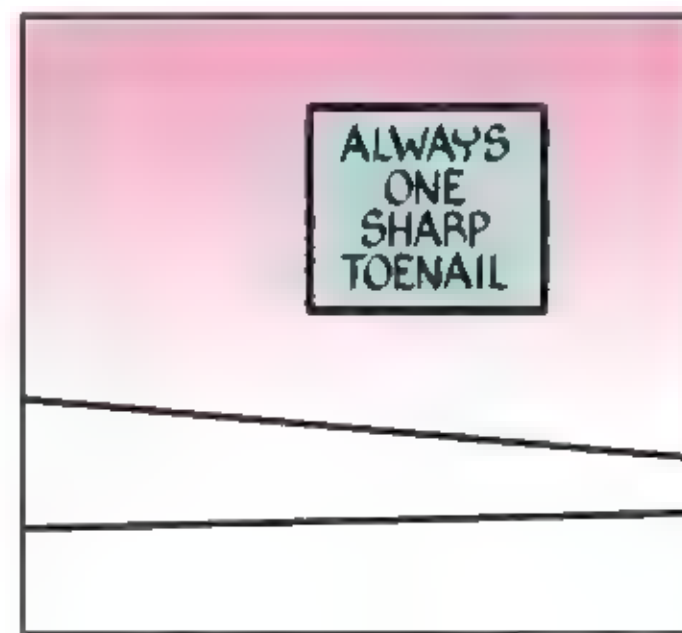
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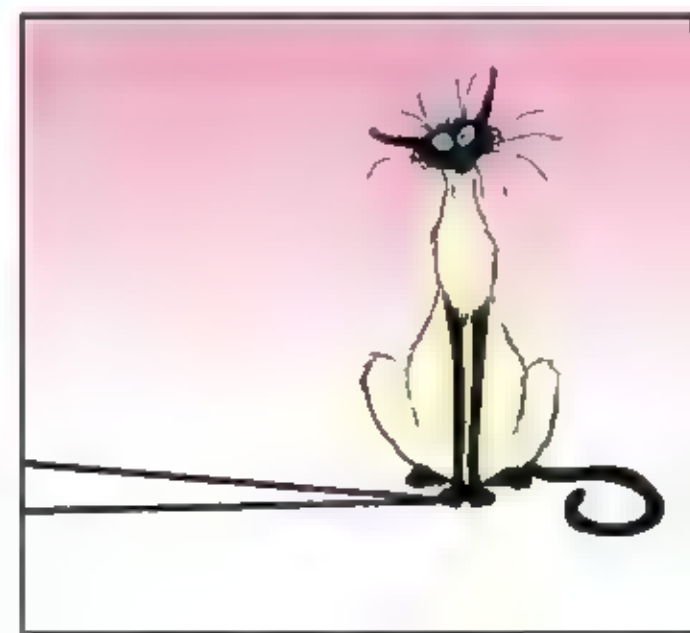
Brooke



HALLMARKS  
OF FELINITY



ALWAYS  
ONE  
SHARP  
TOENAIL





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FLEURRIE!  
OPEN YOUR  
EYES!

YOU JUST FELL  
ASLEEP. I WANT  
YOU TO STAY  
AWAKE. YOU  
MAY HAVE BEEN  
CONCUSSED.

THEY CALL NEW HAMPSHIRE  
"THE GRANITE STATE."  
YOU NEVER NOTICE HOW  
TRUE THAT IS UNTIL  
YOU HIT  
YOUR  
HEAD  
ON IT.

*Brooke*





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I FORGOT MY CELL PHONE,  
AND YOURS SEEMS TO BE  
BROKEN. SO I'M SENDING  
SVEN TO GET  
HELP. I'LL  
STAY WITH  
YOU.



WHY DON'T YOU  
GO FOR HELP  
AND LEAVE  
SVEN?

BECAUSE  
AFTER YOUR  
CONCUSSION,  
YOU MIGHT  
NOT BE  
THINKING  
CLEARLY.



WHY DON'T  
**YOU** GO FOR HELP...  
...AND LEAVE  
**SVEN!**



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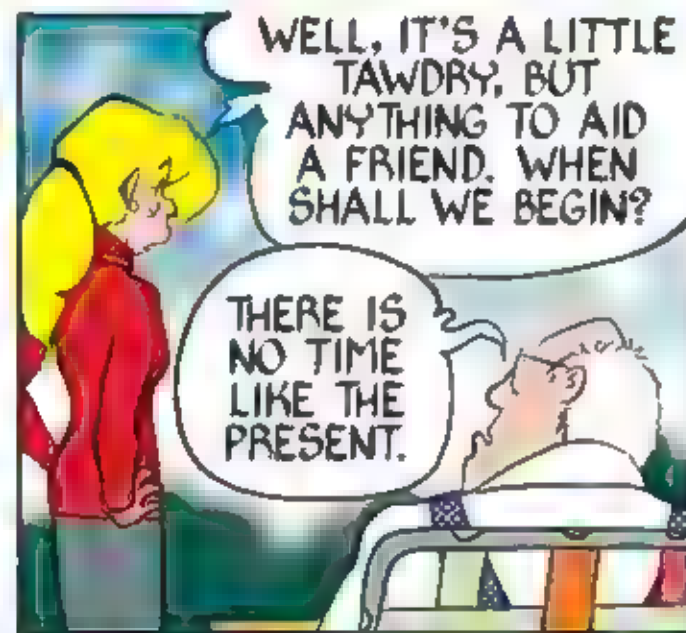
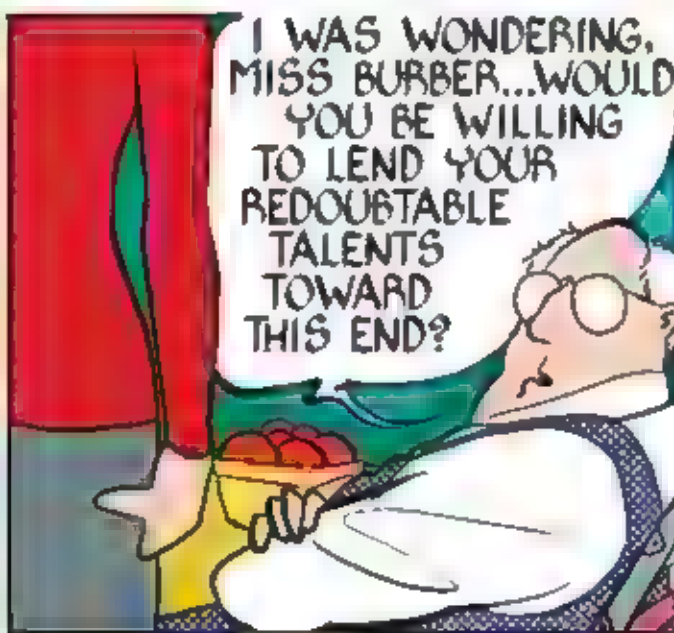
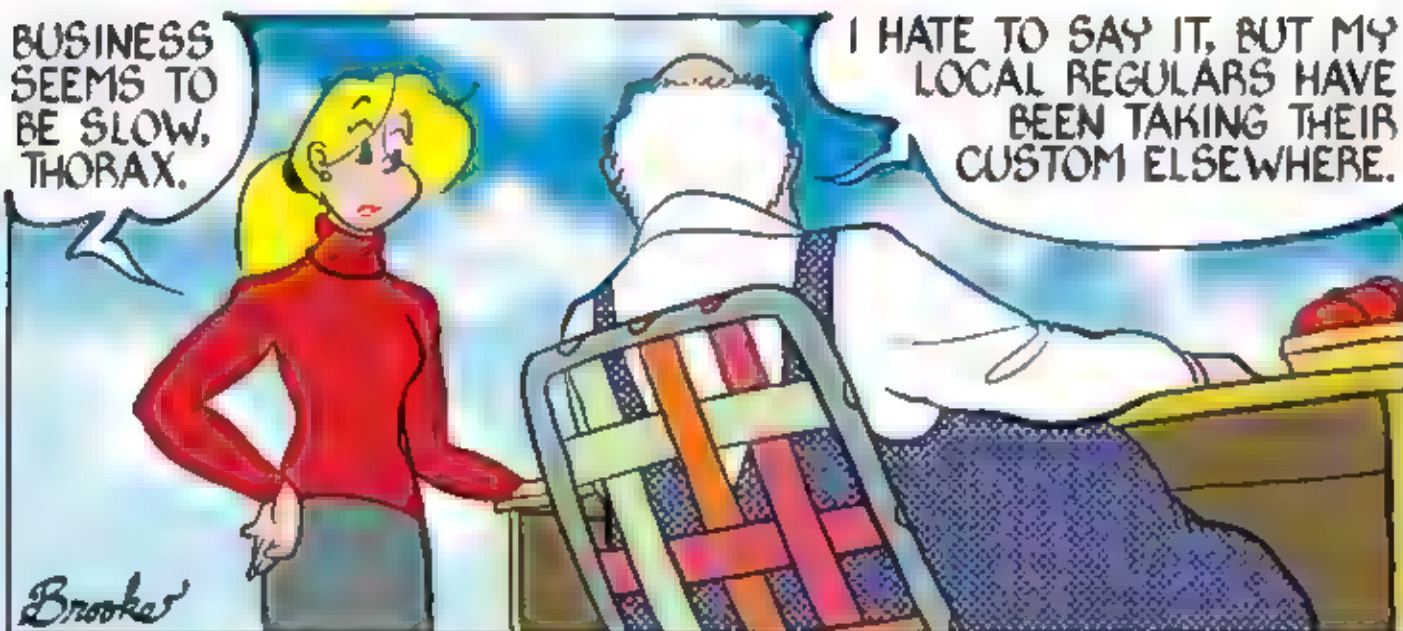
YES...  
...WELL, I SEE  
YOU ARE  
THINKING  
PRETTY  
CLEARLY.



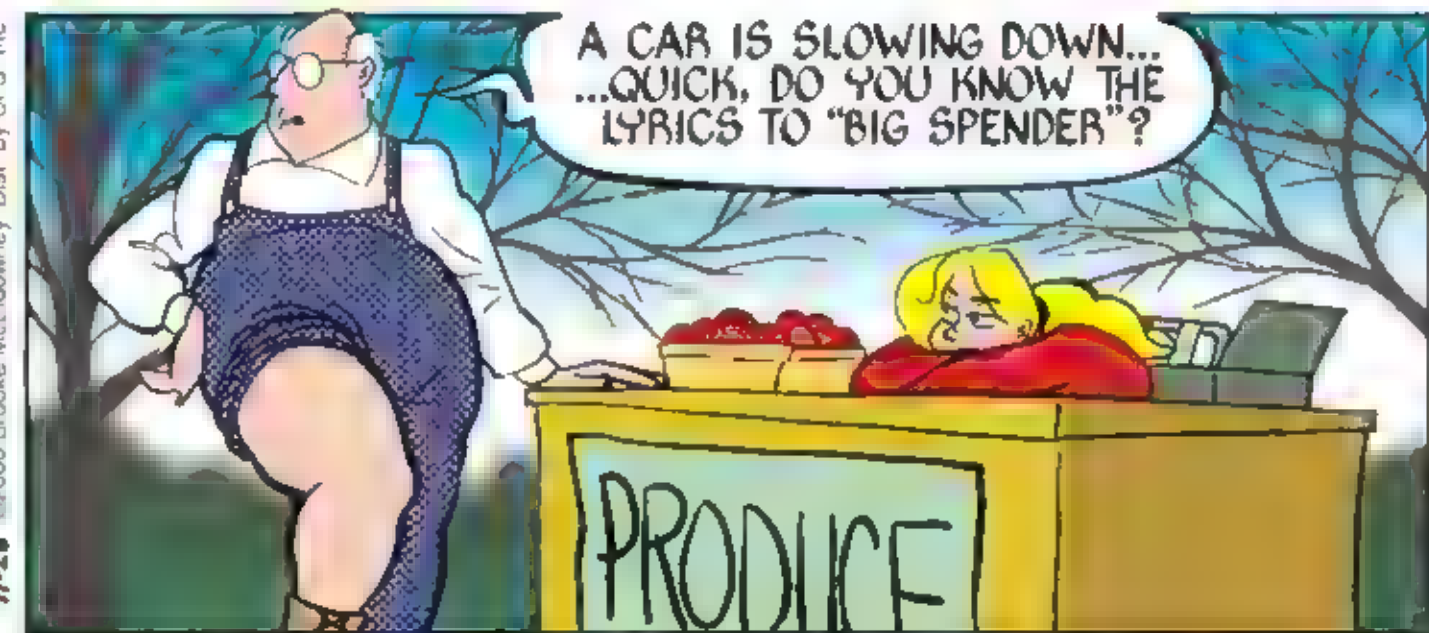
Brooke







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*Brooke*

HOW'S  
YOUR  
VET  
DOING?

SHE'S PRETTY MUCH  
OUT OF IT WITH PAIN-  
KILLERS.

KISS  
ME,  
HARDY.

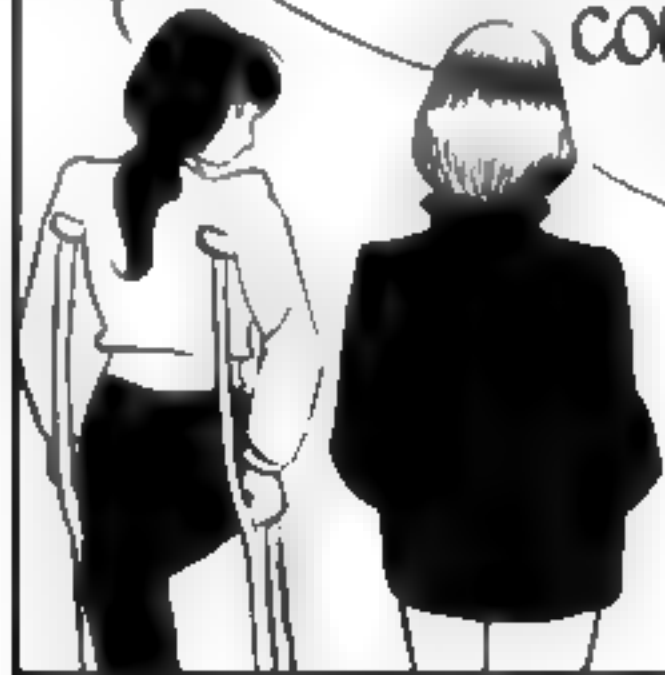
SHE SEEMS TO THINK  
SHE'S LORD NELSON  
AT THE BATTLE OF  
TRAFALGAR.

NOW  
GIVE ME  
A HICKEY,  
HARDY.

I'M GOING TO  
CALL YOU BACK.  
THIS IS GETTING  
INTERESTING.



MY BOSS TOLD ME I'M NOT  
MUCH GOOD NOW EXCEPT TO  
ANSWER THE TELEPHONE,  
AND THAT ANYBODY WHO  
WOULD SANDWICH HERSELF  
BETWEEN A BULL AND A  
FENCE THE WAY I DID  
PROBABLY ISN'T  
COMPETENT  
TO DO  
THAT.



NOT  
AWFULLY  
CHARITABLE.  
WHAT DID  
YOU SAY?



I CALLED HIM  
A SLAVERING  
CRETIN AND  
A BOTTOM  
FEEDER WITH  
CHRONIC  
HALITOSIS.



AS I REPLAY  
THE MOMENT,  
I HAVE TO ADMIT...  
...THAT WAS  
A MISTAKE.



*Brooke*

...A LOVELY,  
DELICIOUS,  
SATISFYING  
MISTAKE.



BEFORE MARCEL USED YOU  
TO BATTER DOWN THE  
FENCE, YOU TOLD ME THAT  
YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE YOUR  
OWN PRACTICE SOME DAY.



HOW MUCH  
WOULD THAT  
COST?

WELL,  
LET ME SEE...  
...AFTER I'VE PAID  
OFF MY LOANS...  
...I'D SAY ROUGHLY  
A MILLION  
GAZILLION  
DOLLARS.



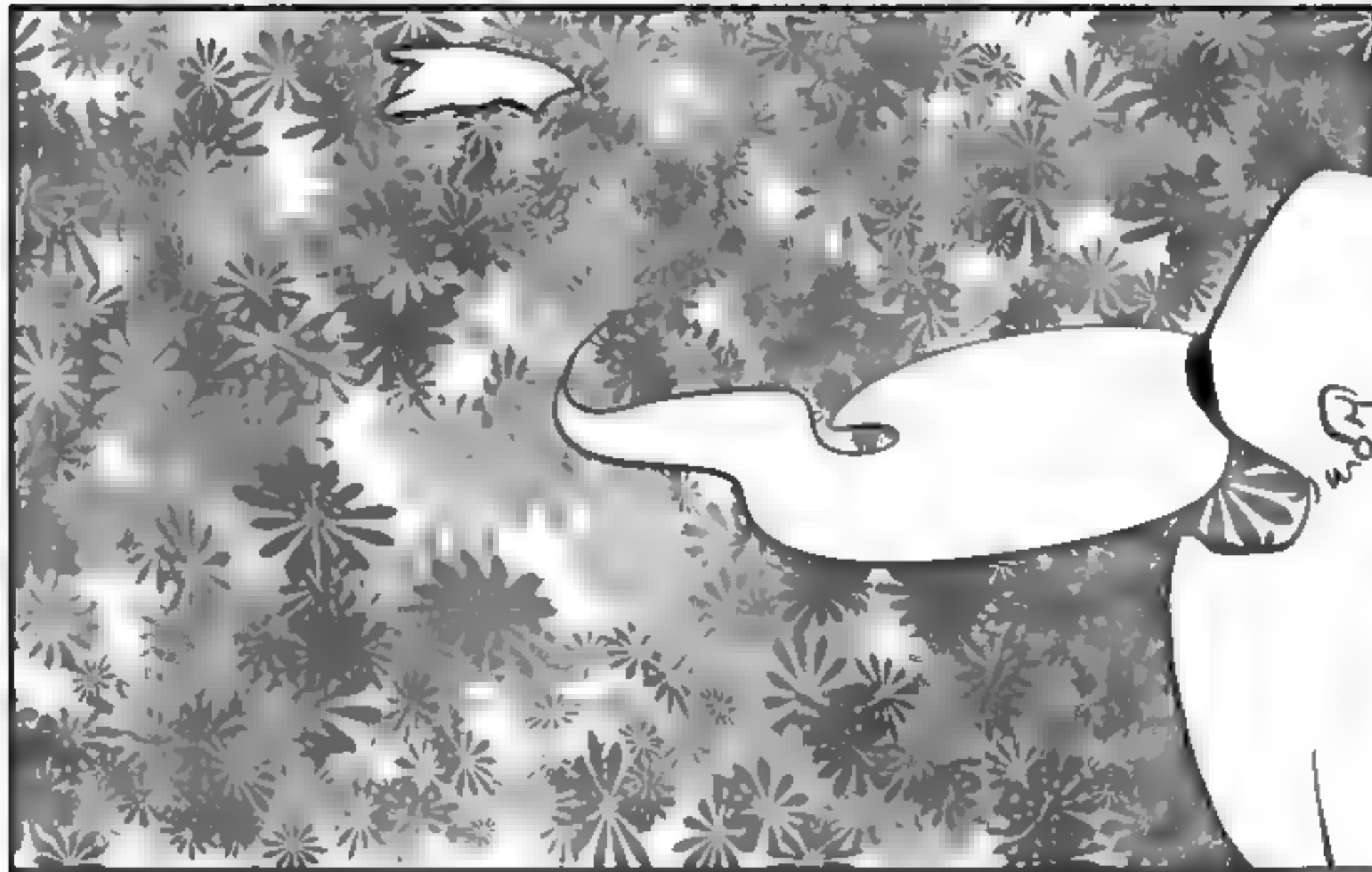
*Brooke*



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HOW MANY  
ZEROS IN A  
GAZILLION?

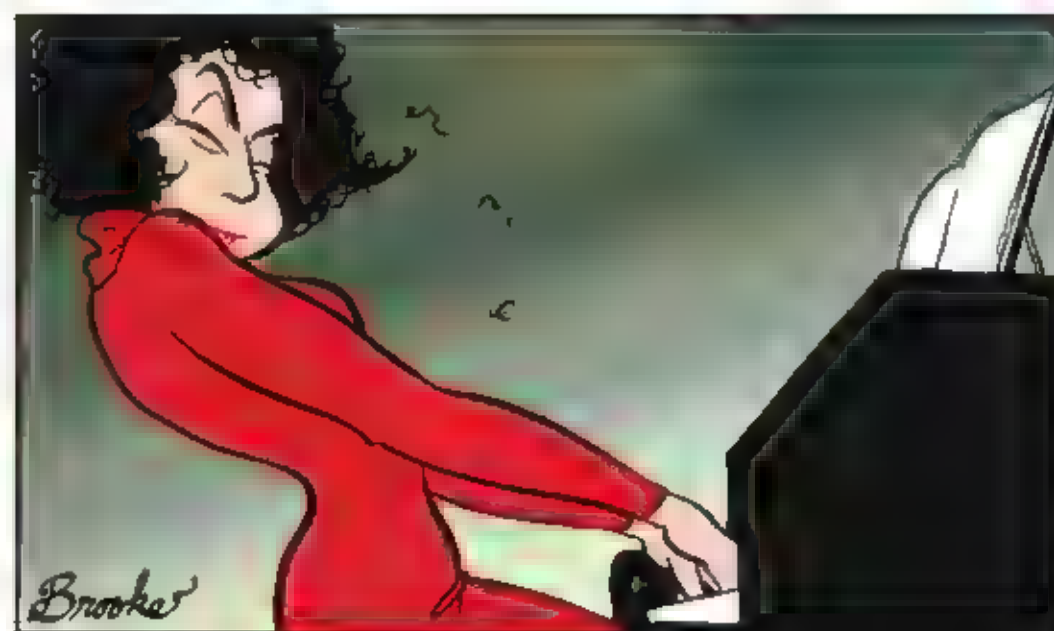
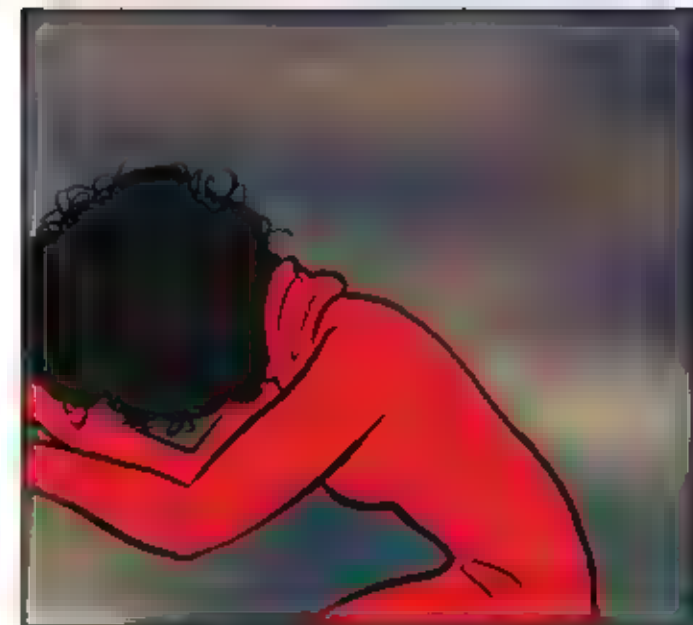
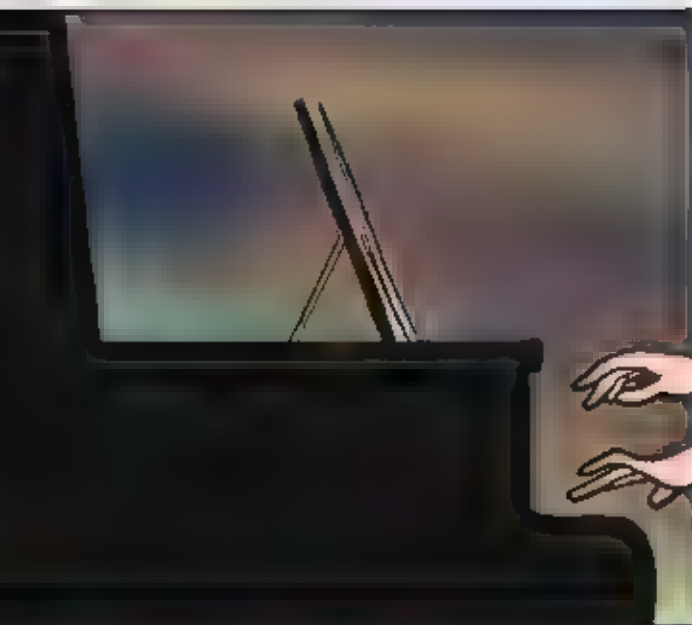




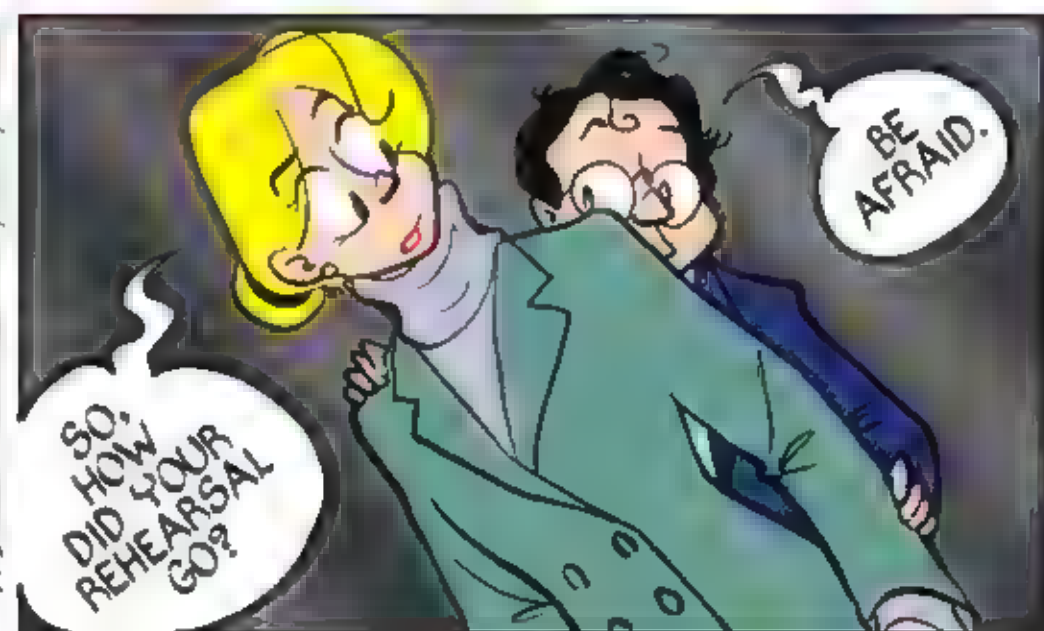


# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

®



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Brooks

I REALLY DON'T  
THINK I CAN  
ACCEPT YOUR  
OFFER TO  
FUND MY  
PRACTICE.

WE'D BE  
BUSINESS  
PARTNERS.  
YOU'D BE  
YOUR OWN  
BOSS.



I DON'T  
KNOW.

AND YOU'D  
BE DEBT-  
FREE.



I'M JUST  
NOT...

YOU  
COULD  
HIRE  
SVEN.



DEAL.



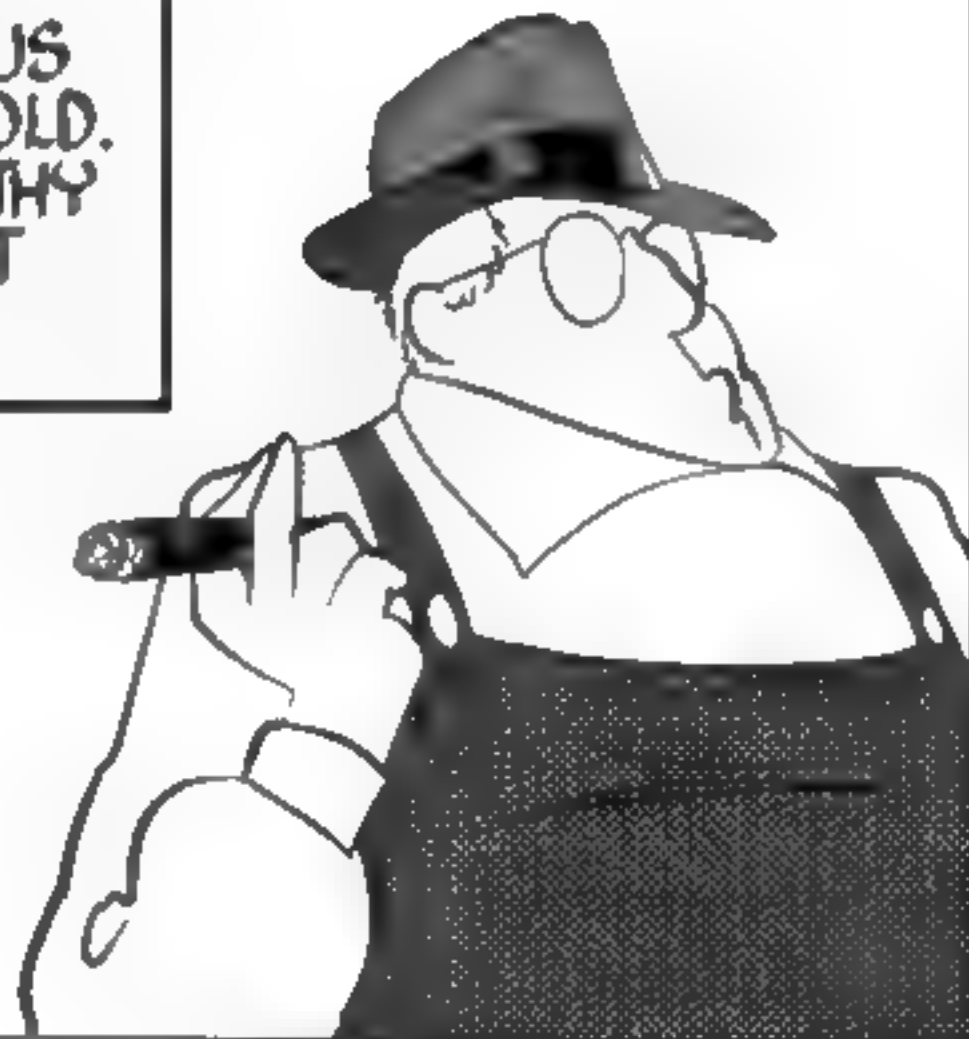
*Brooke*

MEDITATIONS  
OF  
THORAX



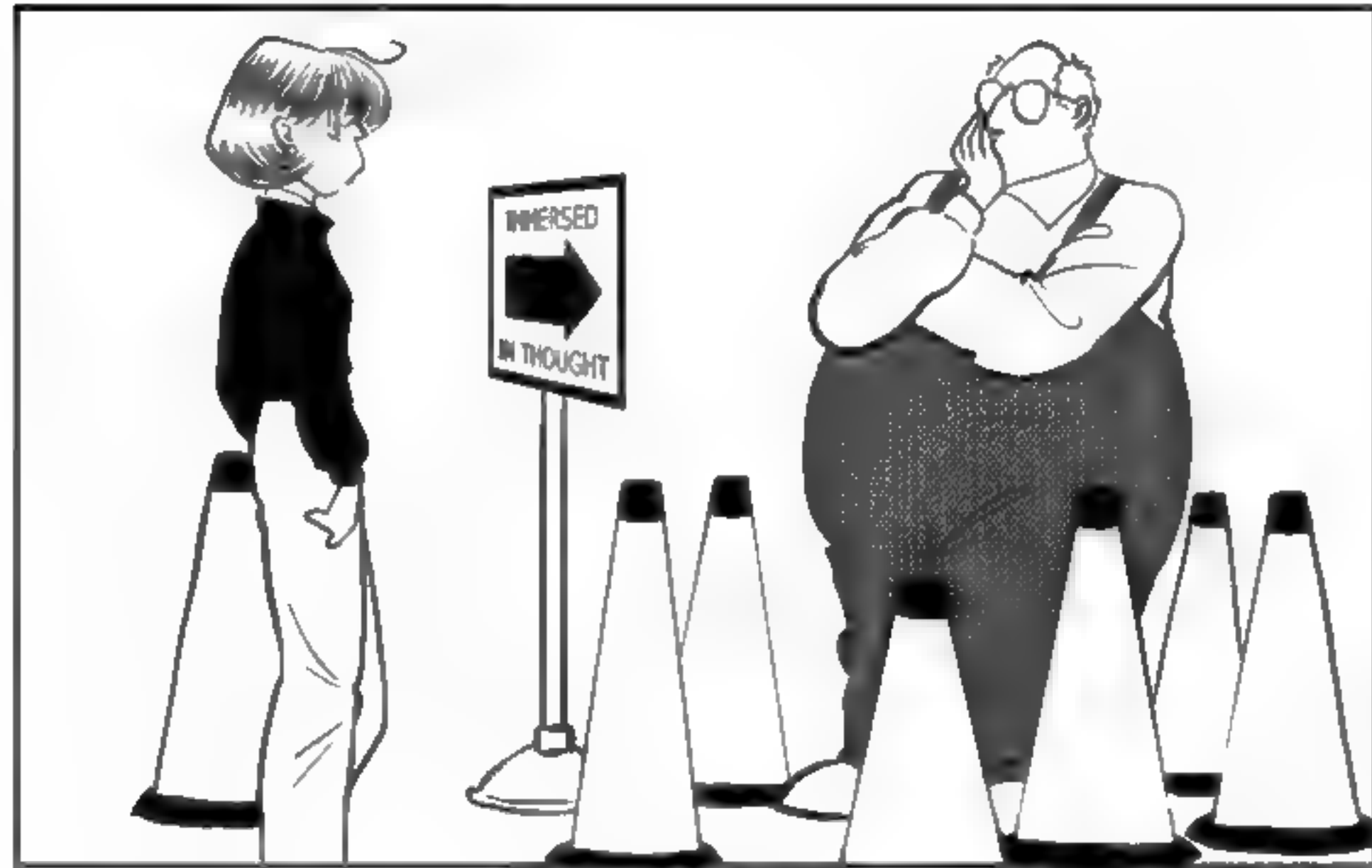
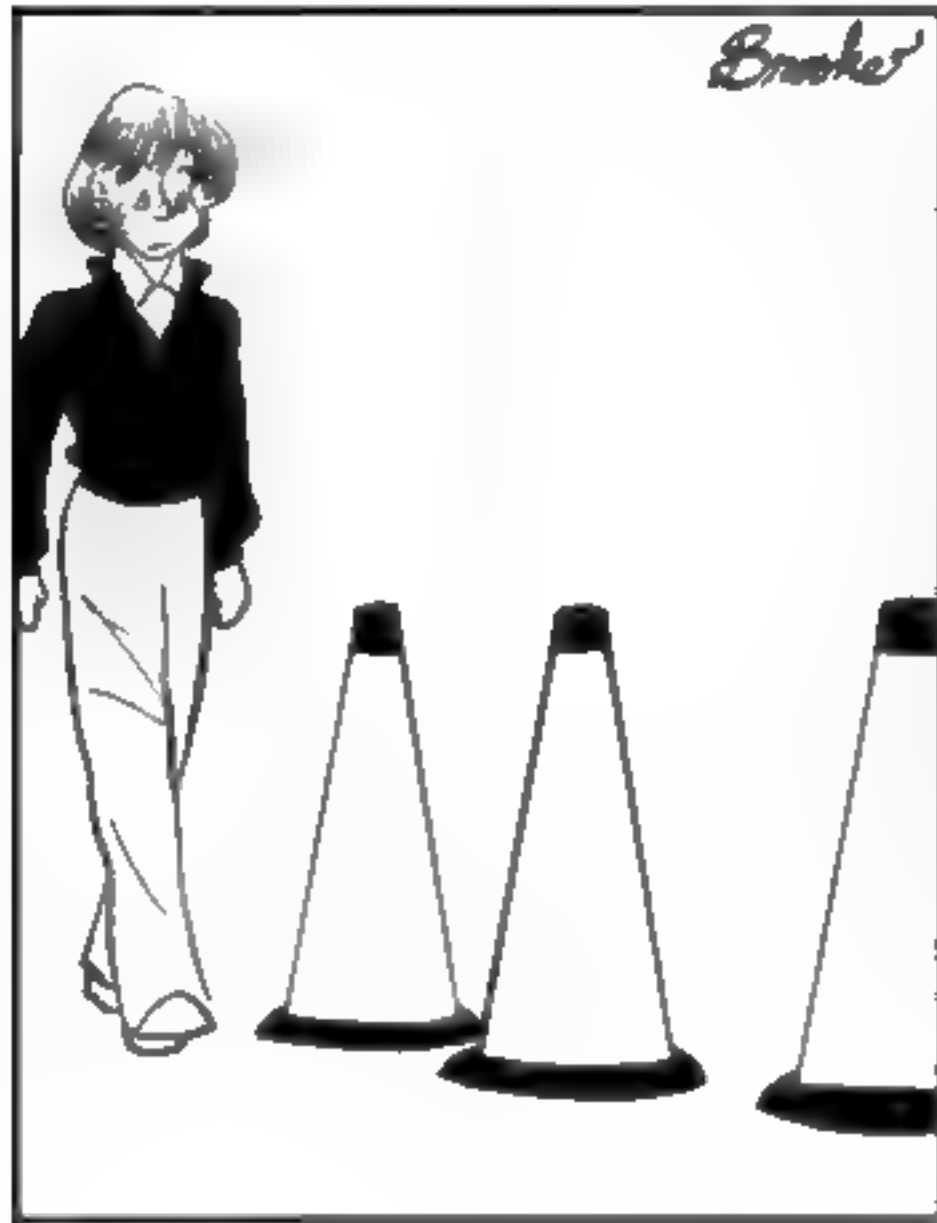
Brooks

THE POOREST AMONG US  
POSSESS HEARTS OF GOLD.  
ONLY THE TRULY WEALTHY  
CAN AFFORD A HEART  
OF SCRAP METAL.

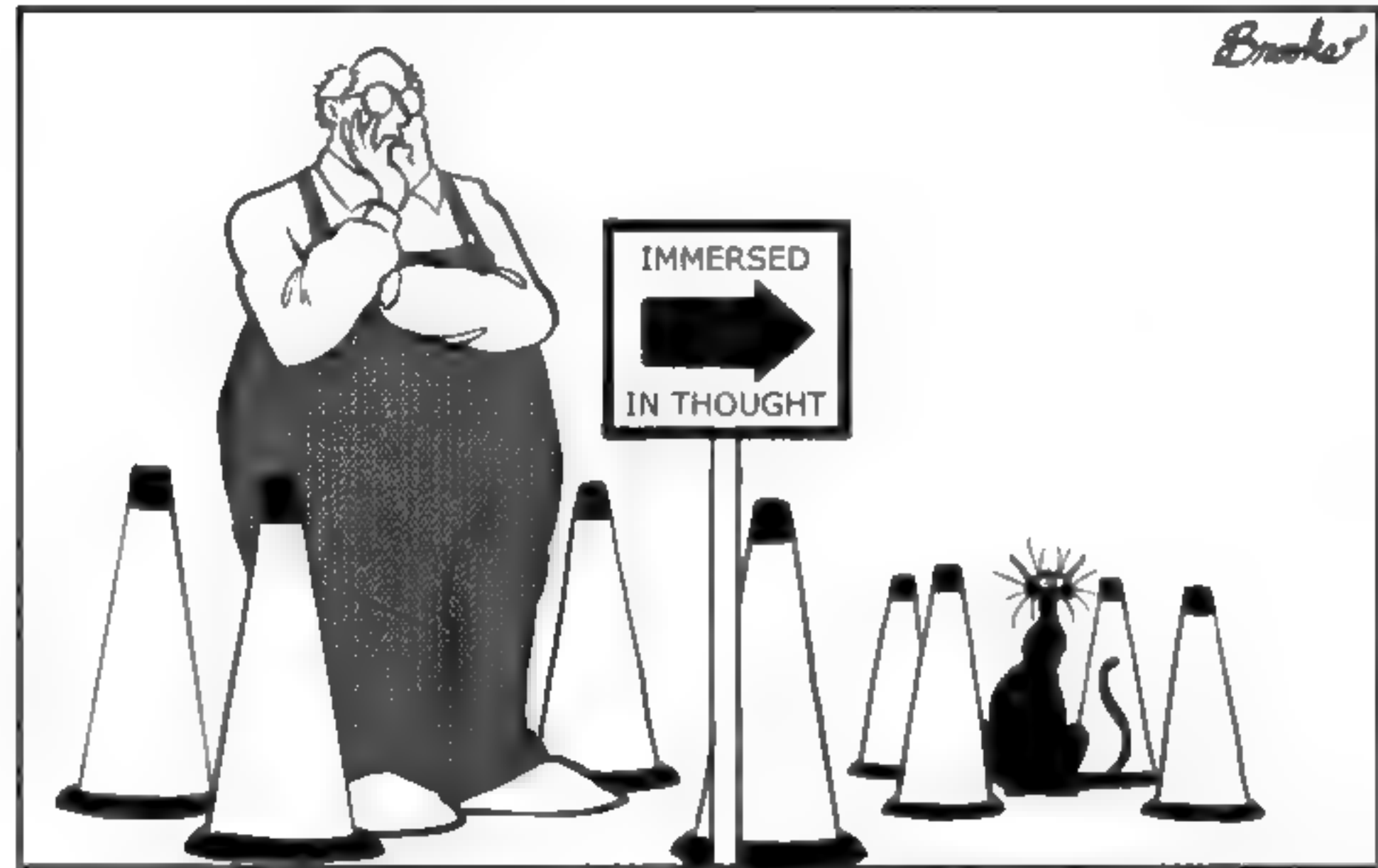
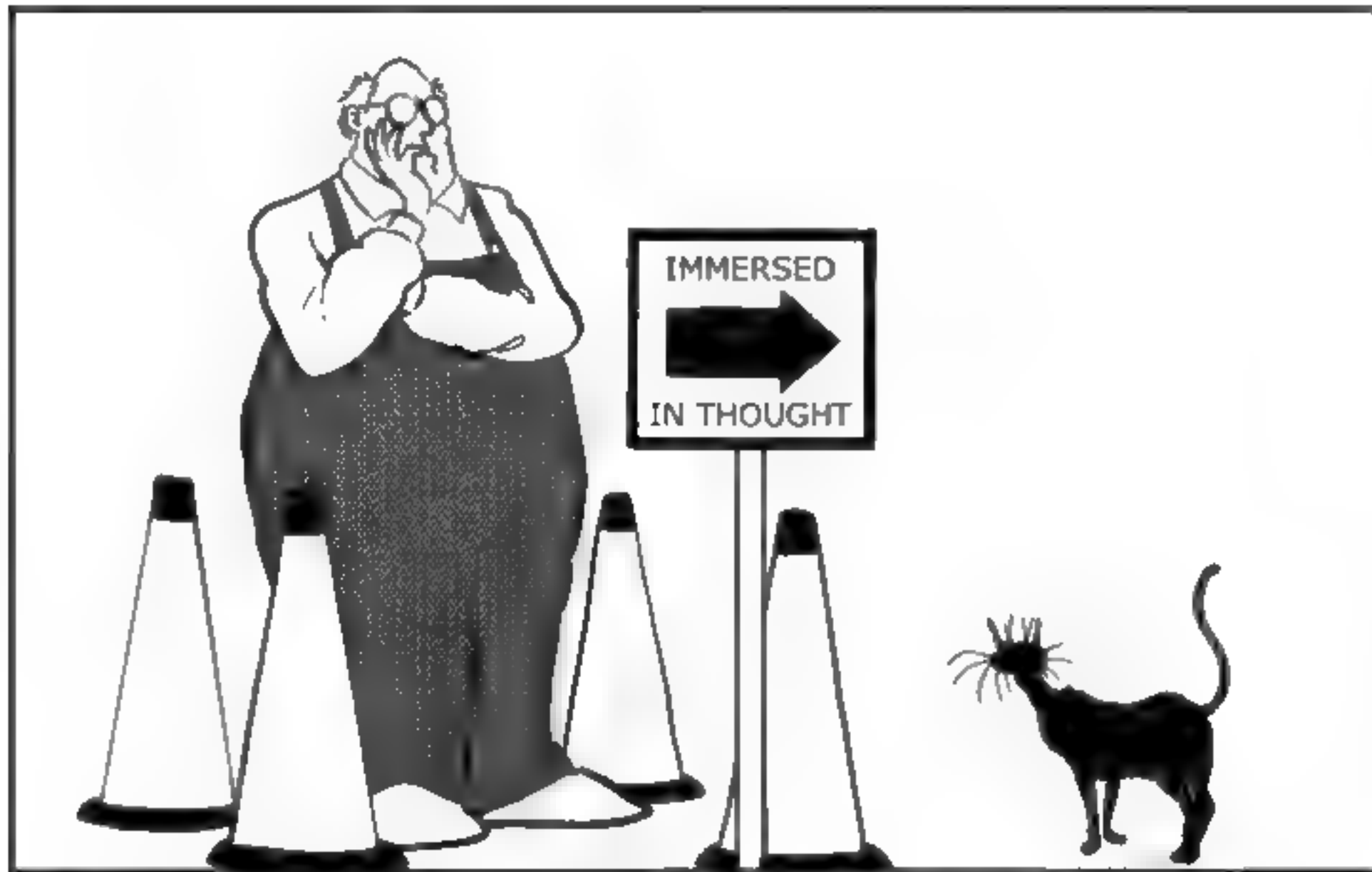


Brooke

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*Brooke*

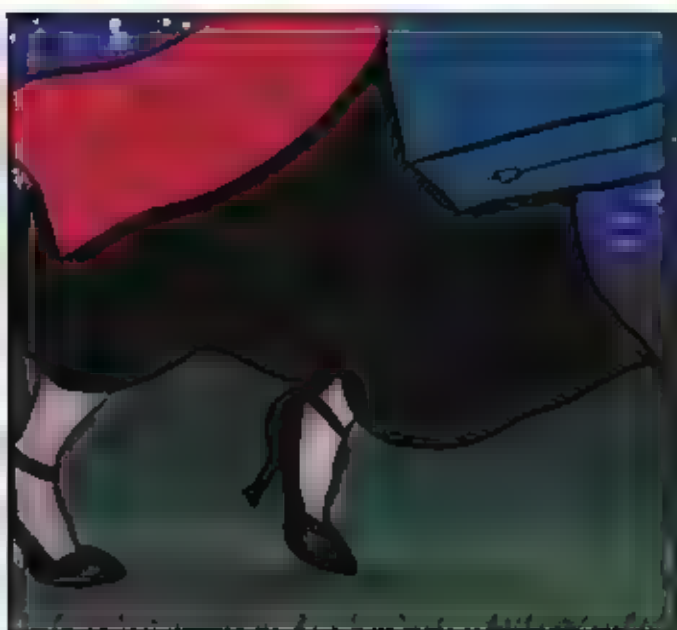
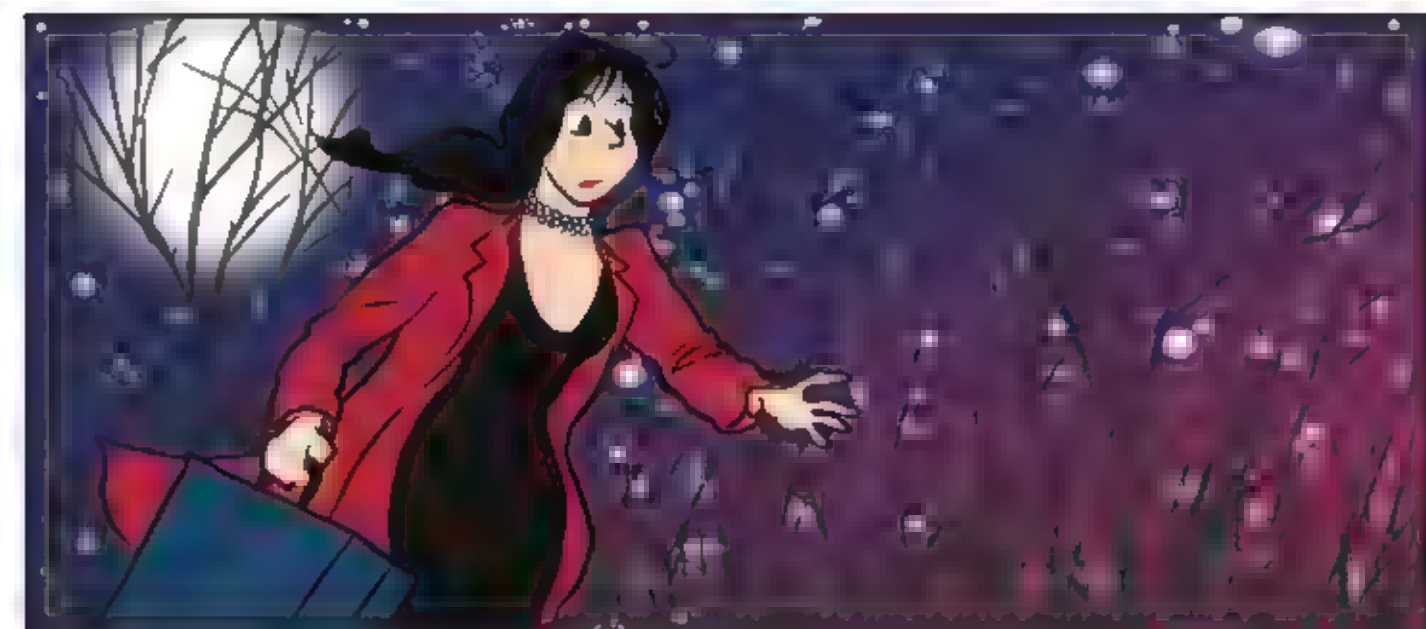
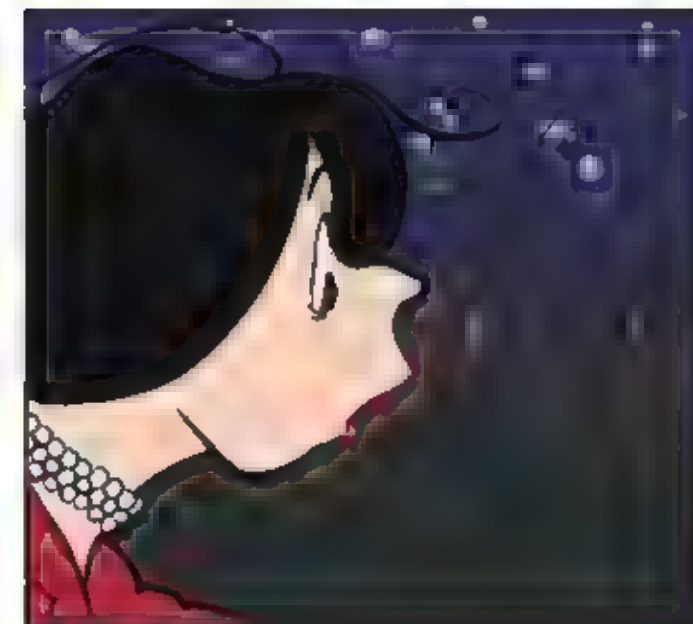
MEDITATIONS  
OF  
THORAX



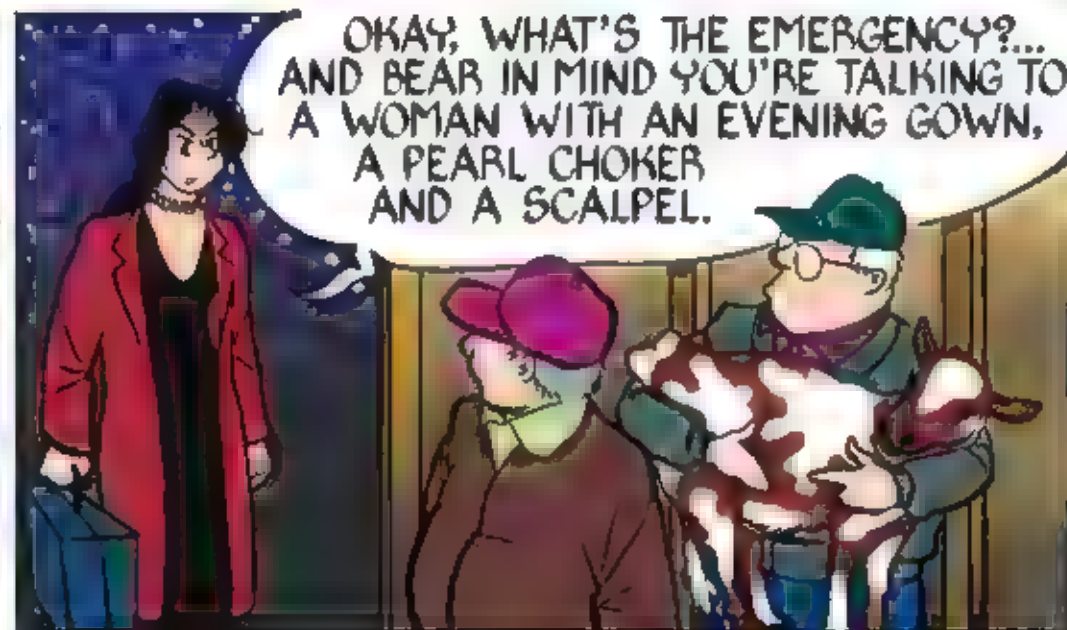
Brooks

IN LIFE'S BATTLES,  
CHARACTER IS THAT  
RARE QUALITY  
ATTRIBUTED TO  
ANYONE WHO LOSES  
BEFORE HE CAN SEIZE  
THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO COMPROMISE  
HIS VALUES.





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OKAY, WHAT'S THE EMERGENCY?...  
AND BEAR IN MIND YOU'RE TALKING TO  
A WOMAN WITH AN EVENING GOWN,  
A PEARL CHOKER  
AND A SCALPEL.

YOU  
WHAT?

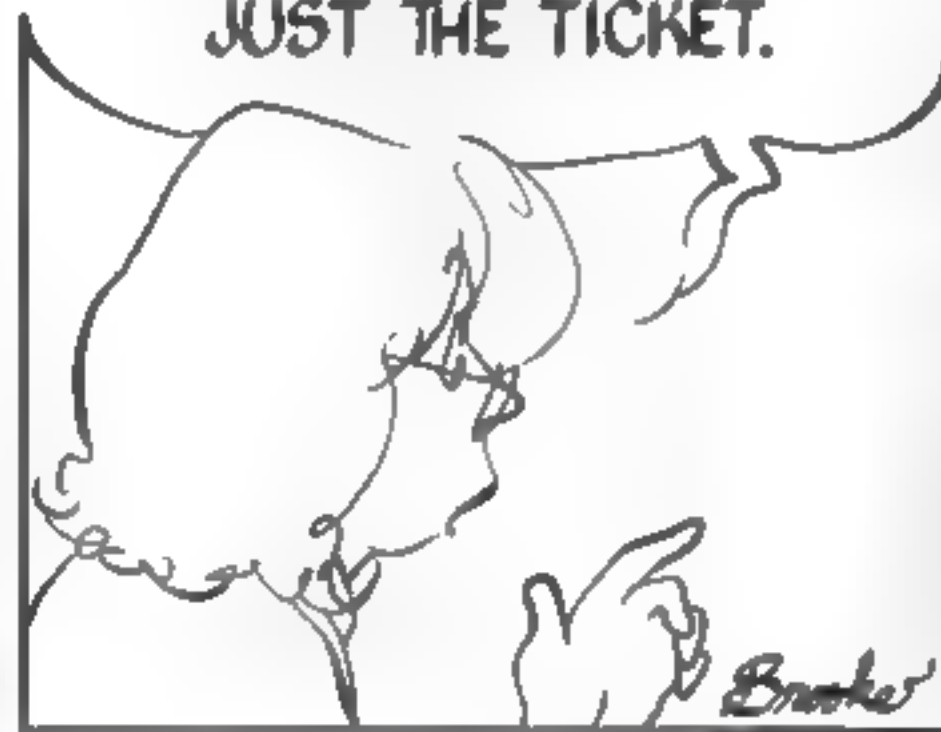
I WANT  
TO RETURN TO  
TEACHING...  
...NOT FULL-TIME.  
BUT I WANT TO  
COME BACK.



WHEN YOU STORMED OUT  
OF HERE, YOU SAID THE  
TRUSTEES ARE SLAVERING  
SATYRS, THE CHANCELLOR  
IS A MONEY-GRUBBING  
HOLOGRAM, AND THAT  
THE STUDENTS' ONLY  
POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION  
TO SOCIETY IS AS OFFAL  
AND SAUSAGE  
CASING.



YOU REVILED THE VERY  
GROUND UPON WHICH THE  
UNIVERSITY RESTS,  
SUGGESTING THAT A WELL-  
AIMED METEOR, AND ENOUGH  
SALT TO SOW IN ITS  
CRATER, WOULD BE  
JUST THE TICKET.



YOU  
MEMORIZED  
WHAT  
I SAID?



WE INTONE  
IT AT THE  
BEGINNING  
OF FACULTY  
MEETINGS.



WHY DO YOU WANT TO COME BACK TO TEACH?

I MET A FORMER STUDENT OF MINE. SHE'S NOW A VET. SHE SAYS SHE OWES WHAT SHE HAS BECOME TO ME.

SHE SAYS I RAN ALL OVER SUBSTANDARD WORK WITH HOBNAILED BOOTS, AND IT MADE HER RISE TO THE CHALLENGE. SHE MADE ME REALIZE THAT, AFTER ALL, I DID SOMETHING WORTH-WHILE HERE.

AND YOU WANT TO DO IT AGAIN?

I BROUGHT ALONG MY HOBNAILED BOOTS.

I'LL JUST SAY YOU'RE THE VISITING PROFESSOR FROM HELL.

I ALREADY FEEL AT HOME

Brooke



PROFESSOR BURBER, I WAS JUST WONDERING, DO YOU HOLD, AS MANY OF US DO, THAT STUDENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT CERTAIN GRADES JUST FOR ATTENDING A COURSE?



YOU'RE SPEAKING OF GRADE ENTITLEMENT...  
...AND, YES, I'M ONE OF ITS STRONGEST PROPONENTS.



YOU'RE ENTITLED TO AN F.



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MAN, THAT FELT GOOD.  
...OH, AND HE'S A THUMB SUCKER.





...COATING. AND I RECALL THAT YOUR LIPS KEPT MOVING AGAINST MINE, SORT OF AS IF YOU WERE TRYING TO SAY THE WORD "WOMBAT," OR "WOBSTAH WOLE"...OR MAYBE IT WAS "WIMBAWAH."

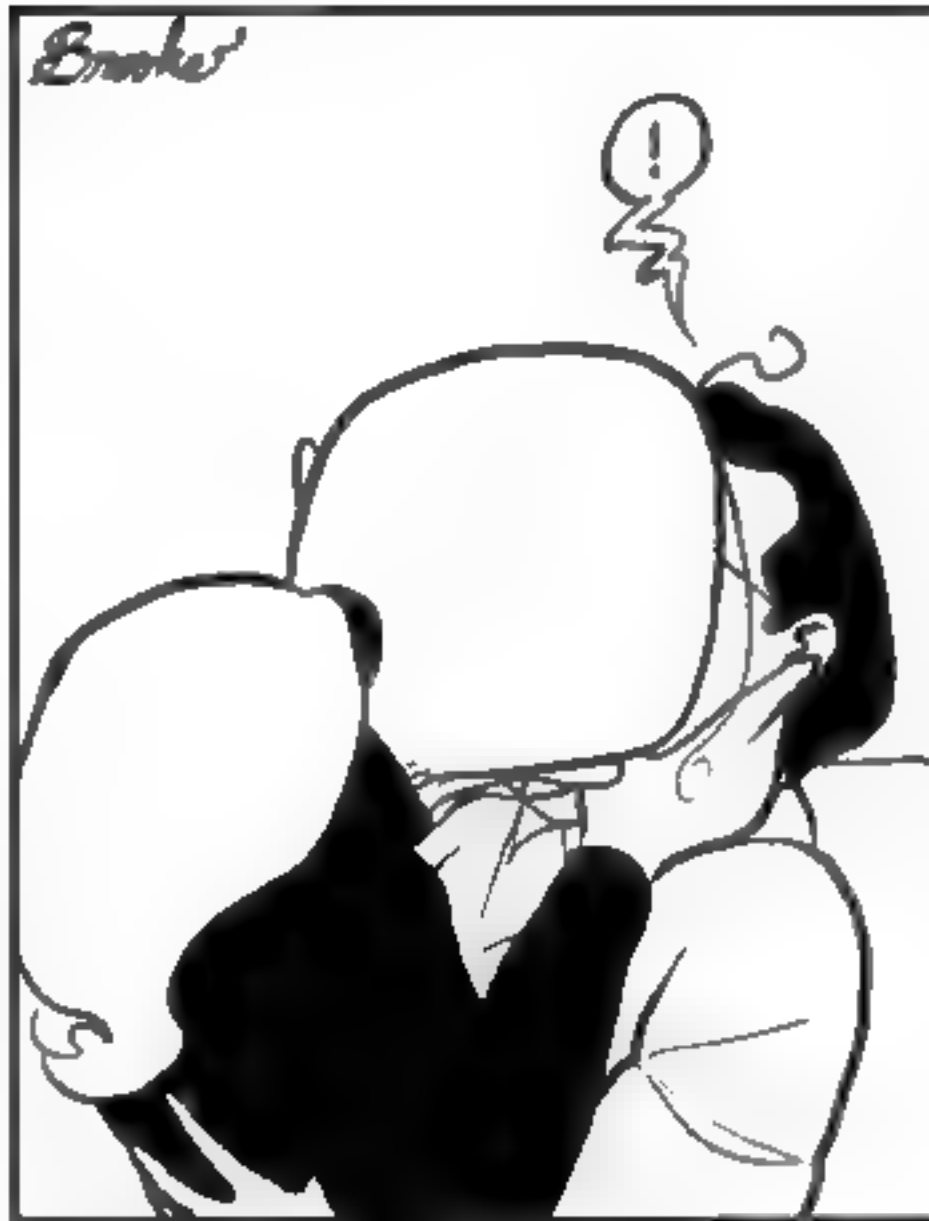
Brooke

FIRST KISS  
REVISITED, CONT

I COULDN'T ASCERTAIN WHICH, AND THE GENERAL LIP DAMPNESS OBSCURED ANY CLARITY...AT WHICH POINT IT HIT ME - YOU MIGHT JUST BE *KISSING* ME. THUS, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT EARLIER ANNELID SIMILE ACCOMPANIED BY A DISTINCT QUEASINESS, I BEGAN

TO SUSPECT AFFECTIONATE UNDERTONES. STILL, THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT YOU COULD POSSIBLY MEAN BY "WIMBA-WAH"...

...REMAINED. THE WET  
WRIGGLING AND THE  
UNCERTAINTY OF YOUR  
WORDS LEFT ME CONFUSED,  
BEWILDERED...





# 9 CHICKWEED LANE





SO, EDDA, WOULD YOU LIKE  
TO SPEND CHRISTMAS UNDER  
MY CHRISTMAS TREE...  
...TEARING OFF YOUR  
GIFT WRAPPING?



DOES EVERYTHING  
YOU SAY HAVE TO  
CONTAIN RISQUE METAPHOR  
AND DOUBLE ENTENDRE?

BUT IF  
IT DIDN'T,  
I'D JUST BE  
MAKING...  
...CONVER-  
SATION.



THAT IS A  
CROSS YOU'D  
HAVE TO  
BEAR.



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WAIT  
A MINUTE.  
SPELL  
"BEAR."





TELL ME...YOU AND EDDA...  
YOU'VE BEEN...CLOSE, IF  
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.  
IS SHE...YOU  
KNOW...

IS SHE...  
...WHAT?



YOU KNOW...THE TWO OF  
YOU...WHEN YOU GET  
TOGETHER...DOES SHE...  
...YOU KNOW...?



I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST  
IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TRYING  
TO GET AT...AND YOUR  
GESTURES COMPLETELY  
ELUDE ME.



I'M SORRY.  
ENGLISH IS  
NOT MY  
FIRST  
LANGUAGE.



NO...  
NITWIT  
IS.

Brooke

LISTEN, AMOS...I'M TRYING  
TO PUT THIS AS DELICATELY AS  
I CAN. YOU'VE KNOWN EDDA  
A LONG TIME. WHEN YOU'RE  
TOGETHER...  
...IS SHE...  
...YOU  
KNOW...



SHE IS MY FRIEND, MY  
SOULMATE AND THE LOVE  
OF MY LIFE. IS THAT  
WHAT YOU MEAN?



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OH, WELL  
NOW YOU'RE  
JUST BEING  
DISGUSTING.



I TRIED TO  
TALK TO  
AMOS  
TODAY.

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME  
FOR? YOU TALK ABOUT  
SEX TO THE  
EXCLUSION OF  
EVERYTHING  
ELSE, AND  
AMOS STILL  
REFERS TO  
IT AS  
GENDER.

Brooke

YOU  
CONJUGATE...  
...HE DECLINES.

YOU'RE GETTING  
ME HOT.

PUNC-  
TUATION  
MARKS  
GET YOU  
HOT.

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# 9 CHICKWEED LANE

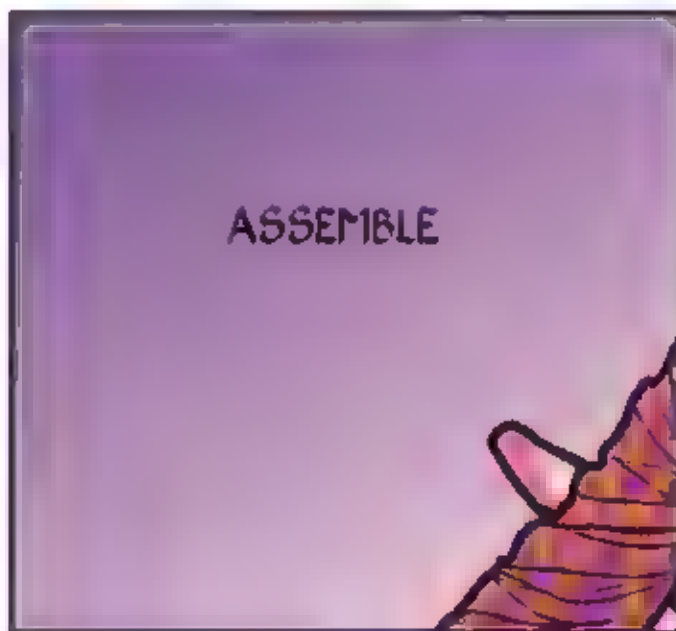
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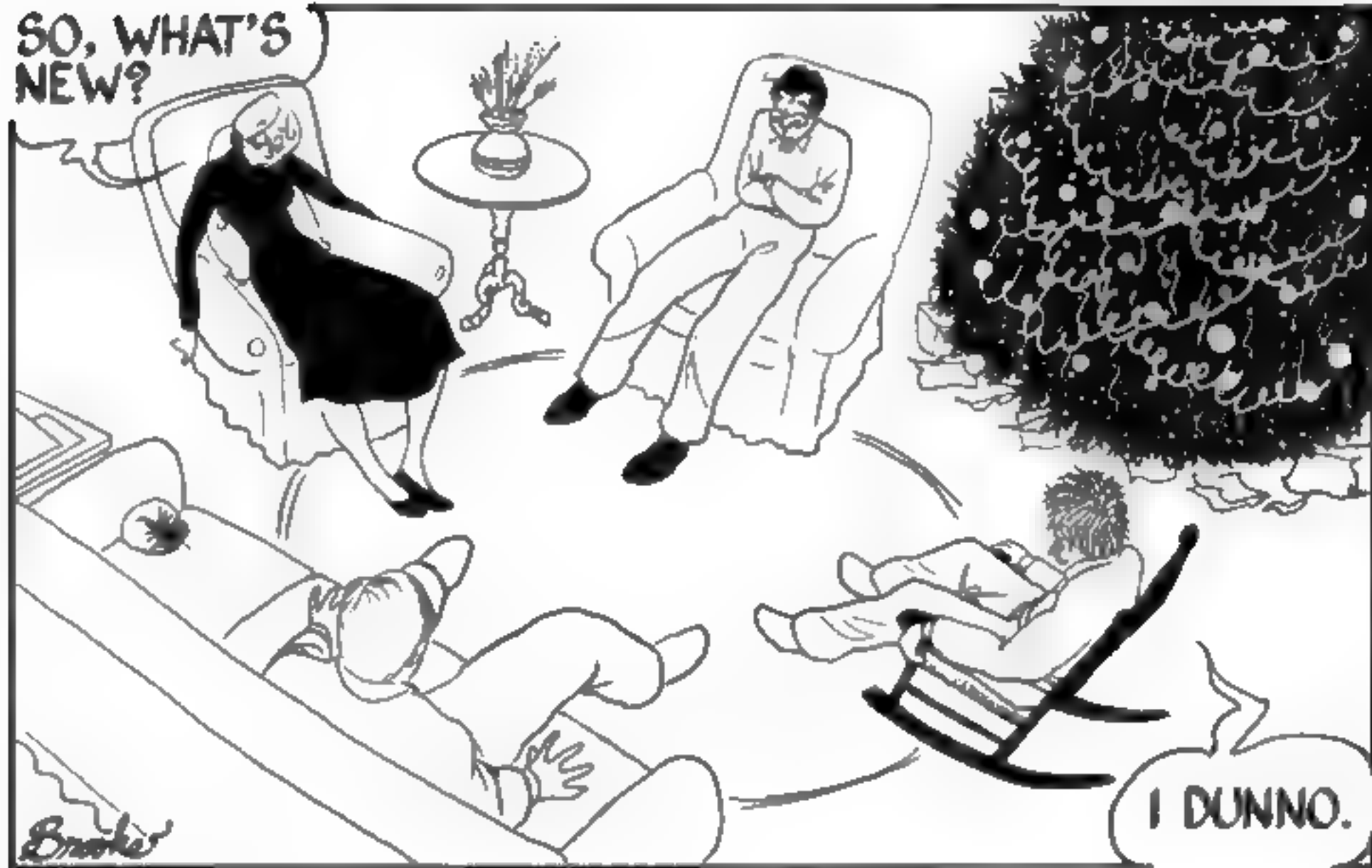


Brooke





SO, WHAT'S  
NEW?



WELL, FOR ME ANYWAY,  
JESUS CHRIST, THE SON  
OF GOD AND SAVIOR OF  
MANKIND WAS BORN.



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THAT WAS  
YESTERDAY.

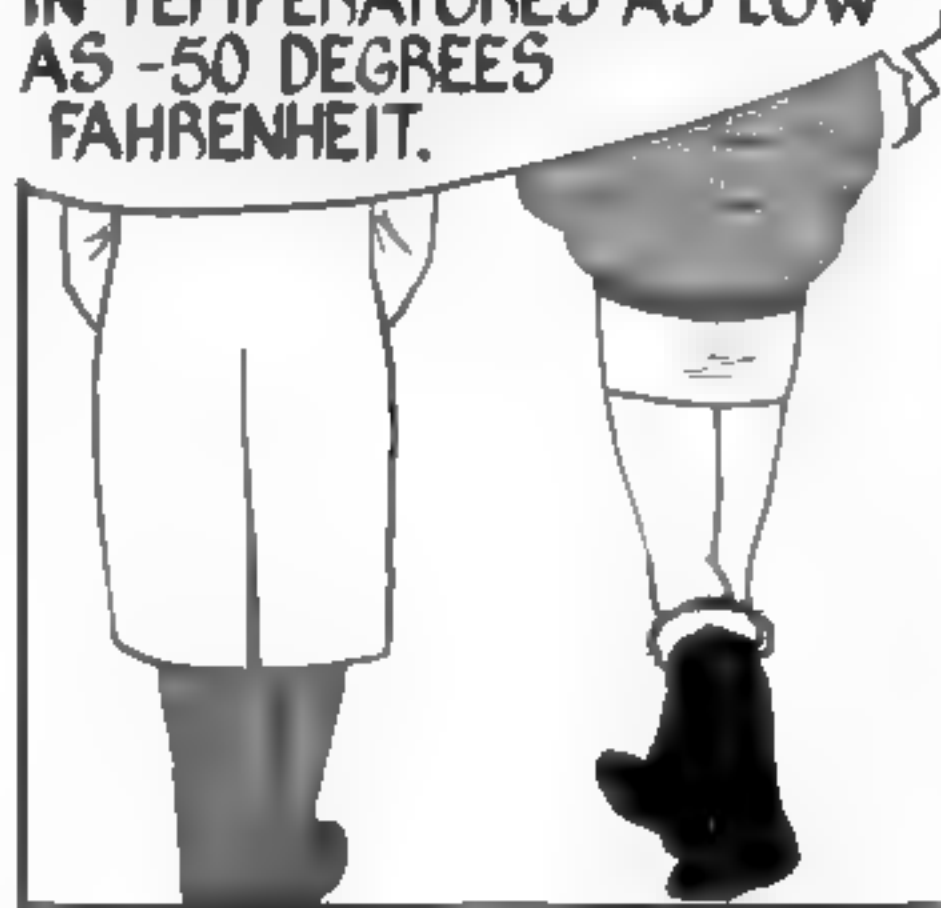
WHAT'S  
GOING ON  
TODAY?



I GOT THIS FOR CHRISTMAS.  
IT'S PACKED WITH A SYN-  
THETIC INSULATION THAT  
SIMULATES GOOSE DOWN.



MY HAT IS SNOW-PROOF  
AND KEEPS MY EARS  
ABSOLUTELY TOASTY. AND  
THE BOOTS WARM MY FEET  
IN TEMPERATURES AS LOW  
AS -50 DEGREES  
FAHRENHEIT.



WHY DO YOU  
WEAR THE  
MINISKIRT?



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I'M A LITTLE WORRIED  
ABOUT EDDA'S SELF-  
IMAGE. SHE JUST TOLD  
ME THAT SHE HAS  
SEXY KNEES.

WHY DOES  
THAT GIVE  
YOU PAUSE?

IT'S SO SUPERFICIAL.  
OF ALL EDDA'S QUALITIES,  
WHY CONCENTRATE ON  
ONE TRAIT THAT NO ONE  
ELSE WOULD NOTICE  
OR CARE ABOUT?

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EDDA, DOLL...SIZZLING  
KNEES! LORD, IF I WEREN'T  
GAY, I'D SO WANT TO...

WHAT'S  
WRONG  
WITH  
MARK?

HE TURNED HIS OWN  
STOMACH...THAT HAPPENS  
EVERY TIME HE HAS  
A STRAIGHT FANTASY.  
COME HERE AND LET'S  
HAVE A LOOK AT  
THOSE DAZZLING  
PATELLAE.

Brooke

THIS NOTION  
THAT YOU  
HAVE SEXY  
KNEES...IT  
TROUBLES  
ME.

WHY?

IT'S SO SUPERFICIAL.  
THEY'RE JUST  
KNEES.

PLAIN,  
SIMPLE,  
FUNCTIONAL,  
...SUPPLE,  
GENTLY  
SCULPTED,  
TOOTH-  
SOME,  
ALLURING...

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Brooke

BUT IT'S  
SO CUTE  
SO YOU  
WHEN YOU  
KNEEL.

ORDINARILY,  
I DON'T  
ATE  
HYPERVENTILATE  
UNTIL AFTER TEN  
ADJECTIVES.

Spermatozoon

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Brooke

Spermatozoon  
motorcycle gang  
terrorizing a small  
town

I FOUND IT  
IN MY OLD  
BIOLOGY  
NOTES FROM  
SCHOOL.

SISTER  
CALIGULA  
WAS SO  
HAPPY  
WHEN  
YOU  
GRADUATED  
EARLY.







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